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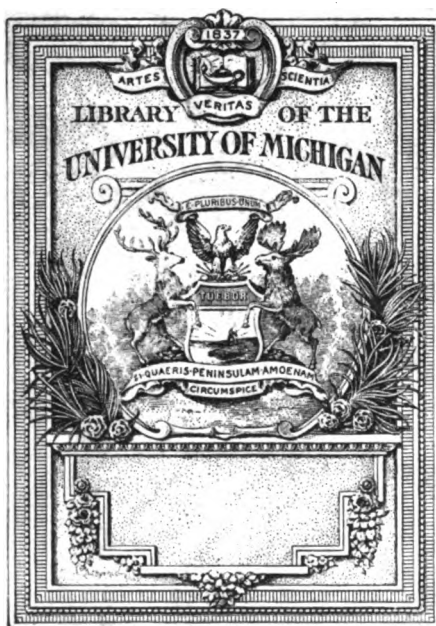
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THE BERNSTORFF PAPERS
VOL. II

THE BERNSTORFF PAPERS

THE LIFE OF
COUNT ALBRECHT VON BERNSTORFF

BY
DR. KARL RINGHOFFER

TRANSLATED BY
MRS. CHARLES EDWARD BARRETT-LENNARD
AND M. W. HOPER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
THE RIGHT HON.
SIR ROWLAND BLENNERHASSETT, BART.

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. II

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AFTER the Congress had been dissolved, and after its results had been accepted by all the continental powers, the displeasure in England at the hurrying forward of peace was unchanged. Lord Clarendon did not conceal his irritation from Bernstorff, and in the sarcastic manner of a man of the world, he observed to Countess Bernstorff on meeting her at a child's party at the palace, that the Prussian representatives had "only arrived for dessert," that Baron Manteuffel had "made himself under-

stood in quite good French," and that Count Hatzfeldt was not a "great speaker." The Countess made some pleasant reply and left the thing to time. The family went to the country for change of air, when all these vexations were over.

"My husband," continues the Countess, "had asked Baron Manteuffel, when he was in Paris, for leave to take a holiday with the children and myself in the country. While the Plenipotentiaries were still in Paris awaiting the ratification and to settle various other matters, we decided to make use of the time. In any case, my husband wished to be in London before Lord Clarendon's return, because there was a prospect of numerous interpellations from the Opposition in Parliament. We spent a few charming days with Sir Culling Eardley at his country place near Torquay, some two hundred and eighty miles from London. We had become acquainted with him and his family in Germany. He was one of the most zealous and prominent members of the 'Evangelical Alliance.' Our host made our visit very pleasant, and we returned to town with the most delightful impressions; we found it so cold and foggy that even our house felt damp and cellar-like."

The relations between Count Bernstorff and Sir Culling Eardley facilitated his furthering a favourite wish of his sovereign's. The King of Prussia, whose efforts had been directed to bringing about a greater union among Protestants, especially a closer union between the national churches of England and Prussia, had said to Bernstorff, that he would be exceedingly delighted if the "Evangelical Alliance" would select Berlin as the place for their next meeting. Bernstorff succeeded in effecting this, upon which the King wrote him a letter of thanks.

King Friedrich Wilhelm IV. to Count Bernstorff.

“CHARLOTTENBURG, 21st April, 1856.

“Your letter of the 10th has filled me with delight, that is the true expression. I had been afraid that the Evangelical Alliance would not think of Berlin for their Conference, for fear of Prussian intolerance. I feel truly flattered at their confidence, and I subscribe to their principles with my whole soul, and I hope for a very blessed future for the entire Evangelical Church. Present my warm thanks to Sir Culling Eardley. It goes without saying that I sanction the meeting of the Alliance in Berlin this year with the greatest pleasure. I have informed the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and the High Consistory of this, and have ordered preparations to be made. I shall give further orders through Krummacher, so that the Conference may be largely attended by the National Church. Greet the Chairman of the Alliance. I am much interested to see what further steps the Evangelical Alliance will take.

“FRIEDRICH WILHELM.”

Immediately after Bernstorff's return from Torquay he was informed, by command of the Queen, that the engagement of the Princess Royal with Prince Friedrich Wilhelm had been announced at Court. He also learnt that King Friedrich Wilhelm IV. had done the same at a luncheon in Berlin. The Queen did not wish to make an official announcement just yet. The King wrote to Manteuffel that the engagement was not to be denied, but it was not to be talked of more than was necessary. When the Queen saw Bernstorff again after the ball, she informed him that Prince Friedrich Wilhelm was expected in England in three weeks' time. With Prince Albert's permission the Count and Countess expressed their good

wishes to the Princess Royal. "She received our good wishes in an embarrassed but engaging manner.¹ She did not dance as she had done last year, but sat by her mother, only dancing in two quadrilles. She has improved very much, and has got thinner. Her features are not pretty, but she has a bright, open countenance, and a very intelligent expression. Although she looks grown up for her age, her manner is childlike and charming, and her movements are light and graceful. She was dressed with more taste, and she wore roses in her hair which suited her well."

In answer to his congratulations to the Prince, Bernstorff received the following letter :—

Prince Friedrich Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

"My dear Count, "POTSDAM, *May 10th*, 1856.

"I thank you and the dear Countess very heartily for your congratulations on my engagement. I was sure of your sympathy, and I am delighted that this event, so important to my happiness, should take place just when you are our representative in England.

"The conduct of your Chief is surprising. Up to the present month he has not said a word to me on the subject, though I am receiving the warmest sympathy from all quarters.²

"This union is one of affection, and you will remember our often talking about such an event at Naples, and that I always declined to consider any marriage but one of the heart. God has brought our young hearts together, and I wish you could either have been present in spirit at Balmoral, or could form an idea of my happiness, for I know now what it is to be happy.

¹ Countess Bernstorff's "Reminiscences."

² Referring to Manteuffel, who was very reserved about the marriage.

"I leave here on the evening of the 17th. . . . In any case, I shall be at Osborne on the 21st, and remain in England till the end of June. My suite will consist of General von Schreckenstein, Colonel von Moltke, Captain von Heinz, and Dr. Wegner. . . .

"(*Signed*) FRIEDRICH WILHELM."

The Prince arrived in England about Whitsuntide. The greater part of his suite remained in London, and the Prince went to Osborne with General von Schreckenstein only, having received a telegram saying, that for lack of room only one person in attendance on him could be put up. Count and Countess Bernstorff were not invited for the same reason. Moltke, Heinz, and Dr. Wegner were summoned to Osborne the next day. Immediately after his return to town, the Prince called on Countess Bernstorff and told her a good deal about his engagement, and he called again after his first journey to Balmoral.

"The Prince told me that the evening before he left Balmoral, Prince Albert, after learning that he had made a favourable impression on the Princess Royal, told him it would be best for him to speak to the Princess himself.¹ The engagement took place the day before he left, on condition that no one should know about it and that he must leave notwithstanding. This was certainly very hard on him, but he obeyed the Queen's and Prince Albert's wishes. He gave the Princess a little Venetian chain which he specially valued when he left, and he himself begged that she should not write to him lest her mind should be distracted from the preparation for her confirmation. Immediately after the confirmation the engagement was to be announced by the Queen,² and he

¹ Countess Bernstorff's "Reminiscences."

² But not officially.

would then be permitted to correspond with his fiancée. The Prince said that the wedding would take place in London, and that he had begged that German customs might be followed, and he laid particular stress upon his having a wedding-ring, which, in England, only the woman wears. He spoke with enthusiasm of his fiancée, saying that she was unusually thoughtful for her age, and at the same time he was sorry for her in leaving all to follow him to a strange land. He told me many nice things about her. She had to wear white at her first drawing-room, but she insisted upon having some cornflowers, because they were 'Fritz's' favourite flower. He complained of having seen her alone very little, as the other royal children were always present. But he hoped it would be better here.

"We asked the Prince whether we might give a party for him, but he declined very amiably, because it would be contrary to etiquette at Buckingham Palace for him to go out in the evening. He only had the afternoons at his disposal.

"He received the diplomatic corps at the Legation the next morning. We had suggested that the reception should be according to German usage, for all to be assembled on his entrance and he could make the circle, but the Prince preferred to hold it in the English manner, and receive each Minister separately. As he was not accustomed to this form of reception, he, in his kindness, talked very long with each diplomat, so that the whole thing lasted over three hours, and the last person had a very long time to wait. The American Minister left without seeing the Prince, because he had to send off a courier.

"Every one was charmed with the Prince. 'He talked to me about the past, present, and future,' the Belgian Minister said appreciatively.

"A Court concert took place a few evenings later, and the Prince sat next to his fiancée, but did not look so good-humoured and beaming as usual, and he talked to her very little. I asked him some days afterwards why he had looked so grave, and he replied that the Queen had requested him not to talk too much to the Princess in public, and this had disconcerted and perplexed him, so he found it difficult to find the happy medium. He suffered greatly because the engagement was not announced, for the Queen nearly always kept him at a distance from his fiancée. It would have been better for the Prince to have returned home if they did not wish, owing to the Princess's youth, to announce the engagement. He was treated as a member of the Royal Family without being accorded his proper rank, while, at the same time, he was denied the privileges of a member of the Family. General von Schreckenstein told me that the Prince was very much in love with the Princess, that she was his one thought, and he seized every opportunity of being alone with her. I shall not, therefore, count upon his coming to us for an afternoon reception. A few days ago carriages were ordered for driving to Sydenham, but the Prince declined, at the last moment, because he had just heard that the Princess would have a free half-hour to give him. He did not like the Princess, whom he considered as grown up, to be treated as a child by the Queen, to be told to hold herself up and the like when he was by. He might have obtained more privileges had he demanded more and been more insistent, but he was too unassuming and considerate. He wanted to ride with the Princess, but he did not express this desire to the Queen, only mentioning it to others, and one morning when the Princess was of the party they were not left to themselves, for a third was always at her side. She usually drove

with her mother, and the Prince and Prince Consort rode by the side of the carriage.¹

"My husband accompanied the Prince to Oxford on Wednesday, June 3rd, when the degree of Doctor was conferred on him. My husband and Lord Clarendon and two other English gentlemen received the same honour. The Prince told me in the evening that he had had such a desire to laugh during the proceedings, and that he had not dared to look at my husband. They all wore red velvet mantles bordered with ermine, over their uniforms, and thus arrayed, wearing their helmets or military caps, they were taken to see the sights. His own mantle, he laughingly told me, was much too short.

"When the Prince returned from calling on the ex-Queen Marie Amélie at Claremont, he learnt from Prince Albert that his fiancée had met with an accident which might have cost her her life. The sleeve of her thin muslin dress had caught on fire, and the Princess, without losing presence of mind, called to her governess and music-teacher, who were in the next room: 'Don't be frightened, but I am on fire.' They both rushed in and threw a rug over her, but it was too stiff and thick to cling to her, and she felt the fire under it. They rang and ordered water, and then she begged her sister to bring her some cotton-wool from a box of trinkets which chanced to be there. She never lost her presence of mind for a moment, and to this she owes her life. She has numerous burns on her arm, and suffered frightfully for some days and

¹ "Fritz Wilhelm is here, *every* spare moment Vicky has (and I have, for I must chaperon this loving Couple, which takes away so much of my precious time), is devoted to her bridegroom, and who is *so* much in love, that, even if he is out driving and walking with her, he is not satisfied, and says he has not seen her, unless he can have her for an hour to himself, when I am naturally bound to be acting chaperon."—"Queen Victoria's Letters," Vol. III., pp. 276, 277. By permission of the Editors.—Tr.

nights. The poor Prince was most disconsolate, but had to go to Lady Westminster's ball, which he had only accepted for the pleasure of dancing with his fiancée. The Queen took the accident very calmly, and said that the doctor had assured her that there would be no scars left. Our King and Queen were extremely excited at the news of the accident, and telegraphed to my husband for further news, commanding him to express their deepest sympathy with the Princess and her parents. . . . The Prince deferred his departure for a few days because the Princess was suffering so much he could not make up his mind to leave her. The Prince was to have paid a visit to the French Court. Madame de Persigny said to me at the ball at Windsor after the Ascot races, that she had asked our Prince if he was going to Paris, and he said he feared he should not because he did not wish to lose one day which he could spend with the Princess, and he had to be in Berlin at a certain time. I asked him if he would like to visit Paris, and he said: 'Yes, it would be very interesting to see the Court there.' This answer struck me, because it showed the influence of the English Royal Family in favour of Louis Napoleon. King Friedrich Wilhelm IV. telegraphed his consent to the Prince's visit, but with the condition that he must visit the French Emperor. As Louis Napoleon had just left Paris for Plombières, the journey did not take place, to the Prince's regret. Another thing which prevented him from making the visit was that he had heard from the King that no alterations could be made in his future residence, Friedrich Wilhelm III.'s palace.

"The Prince had at first been delighted to have this palace, and had made sketches with Prince Albert and the Princess Royal, with the advice of Beirat, an architect from Berlin, for the necessary alterations. But when the Royal

Family assembled there on the anniversary of Friedrich Wilhelm III.'s death, respect for his memory conquered the practical considerations of life. They decided not to allow it to be altered. Much later the Prince obtained permission to have some building done.

"The Prince's departure was fixed for Saturday, May 26th. The Princess Royal was, to his great joy, decidedly better. The accident, he told me, had enabled him to see more of his fiancée. He knew nothing as to the date of his wedding beyond what the Duchess of Gloucester had said to him about its taking place perhaps in the autumn. The Queen, as I gathered from his remarks, had said nothing to him about it. The Princess felt his leaving very much. There can be no doubt as to the affection between the young couple. The Princess said to those about her, with the artlessness of a child: 'I am desperately in love!' When some one said to her that Prince Oscar of Sweden was good-looking, she eagerly exclaimed: 'You do not mean to say he is as good-looking as my Fritz?' The Prince told us on leaving, that our summer plans might be thwarted, as his father and mother, who had intended to pay a visit to Osborne in July, were coming to London instead. 'Mamma wishes my sister to see something of London society, and for her to be seen there.' The news surprised us very much, especially as the Queen's journey, according to present arrangements, was fixed for July 4th, and we had hoped to begin our holiday then. This hope we must now abandon. The King of the Belgians and his daughter, Charlotte (who became the wife of the Archduke Maximilian of Austria, the ill-fated Emperor of Mexico), and his son, the Count of Flanders, arrived in London shortly after this, and Count and Countess Bernstorff met them at a Court concert.

"One can see what a handsome man the King of the Belgians must have been in his youth," writes the Countess. "Princess Charlotte has regular features, and reminds me of her mother, though she is handsomer than she was. Her expression is cold and inanimate, and she is a complete contrast to the Princess Royal, whom I think, after seeing the two together, a thousand times more attractive. The latter appeared at Court that evening for the first time since her accident. The suffering she has gone through has given her an interesting expression which is wonderfully becoming. She cannot yet wear a sleeve on her burnt arm, but it was covered by some clever arrangement of white crape. The French Ambassador and Ambassadress, Count and Countess de Persigny, were at the party, but they arrived long after the concert had begun. The Queen gave them a friendly nod from a distance, but the Ambassador was rather embarrassed, and was so awkward in making his bow that he nearly turned his back on the Queen. Excuses were made for him in matters of etiquette at the English Court, which was very strict otherwise. The Queen, who takes any lack of respect very ill, excuses little slips when she sees that they are owing to ignorance of Court customs. Madame de Persigny is regarded as a child at Court, and the Queen is amused and simply laughs at her blunders. The couple are a source of much amusement in Court circles on account of their little matrimonial squabbles, which take place before every one. It would be too much to tell all the jokes made at their expense."

Princess Charlotte's beauty excited much notice at the concert. "I myself," says the Countess, "prefer the bright, intelligent little Princess Royal," who was herself greatly charmed with the Princess Charlotte. She said to a lady: "How beautiful Princess Charlotte is!" and on the lady replying, "Yes, she is handsome, but I think there is some-

thing lacking in her beauty," the Princess Royal turned to Lady Caroline Barrington and said: "If Charlotte is not considered beautiful, what will be said of me?"

On July 9th the Guards returned from the Crimea, and were received with jubilation. Only a small part of them, however, had been engaged in the battles of the Alma and Inkermann. The Queen was greatly interested in her troops, the Countess writes, and held reviews at Aldershot, wearing a sort of uniform, a red tunic with a marshal's badge, and a hat with red and white feathers. The Prince and Princess of Prussia arrived in London on the same day that the Guards entered it. Bernstorff had been looking forward to their coming, especially to that of the Prince, with whom he hoped to exchange opinions on political affairs.

At this place a document may be subjoined which the Prince sent to Bernstorff during the month immediately past. Its subject is the triple agreement of April 15th, 1856, between England, France, and Austria for the maintenance of the integrity of Turkey. The idea of such an agreement was suggested by Count Buol just after the breaking up of the Vienna Conference. "The Austro-French Memorandum of November 14th, not signed by England, took up the idea again, and both Powers pledged themselves by it when peace was ultimately concluded, to sign an agreement for the maintenance of the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The prospect of this agreement was then used as a main argument to persuade England to unite in the Austro-French Ultimatum. During the Congress, Buol again raised the question, because he dreaded the isolation of Austria in the south-east and in Italy, and feared the revenge of Russia, which he supposed would be everywhere hostile to Austria in its foreign policy after peace was made. England and

France accepted his proposal, although Louis Napoleon had doubts at first about it. The announcement of this arrangement, made with the greatest secrecy, roused tremendous indignation in Russia. The agreement seemed to be a "special alliance of mistrust of Russia's good faith," and they thought that they had now discovered that during the Congress they had unconsciously "been sitting opposite to a silent triple alliance." The new political situation evoked by this agreement is the subject of this letter, which joins in condemnation of the whole proceeding.

The Prince of Prussia to Count Bernstorff.

"BERLIN, *May 17th*, 1856.

"I thank you very much for your two letters; the first one crossed mine, and the second showed that you had at last received the announcement of my son's engagement. He will take you this letter. I hope you will be for him and his suite a friendly adviser.

"In politics the separate agreement of April 15th is probably the most significant state document of recent times. After peace had just been sworn, an agreement is made a fortnight later (which was already contained in the peace), and so is a provocation to Russia. If one may say so, I consider this political tactlessness. Prussia has to be on her guard on two points: first, against any land guarantee with Austria; and second, against a counter-treaty *with Russia*. We must keep a free hand on all sides. Manteuffel is now of this opinion; but if pushed towards Russia, he will not resist, nor against Austria. This is our lot.

"PRINCE OF PRUSSIA."

The policy which Prussia had to follow for the time has here been clearly pointed out by the Prince. Complete

independence only could be their watchword. The carrying out of this policy did not seem to be too difficult after the fighting in the Crimea was over. Prussian statesmanship in the past had been uncertain and vacillating, because wishing to combine contrary aims, but quite loyal towards both Russia and Austria and the Western Powers. They had not raised hopes as Austria had done under Buol, of which no single thing had been fulfilled. Thus it was that even in London, where there had been much bitterness against Prussia, a more friendly view became manifest shortly after the peace, better than towards Austria. This feeling in London improved now that the Prince and Princess of Prussia had arrived to make the acquaintance of their future daughter-in-law. A close tie seemed henceforth to unite the two dynasties.

The Countess gives a charming picture of the visitors' arrival in London. She met the Prince the next day at a dinner-party at Court. "I was only too glad to look at him ; he seemed to me a real knight in his noble, distinguished bearing, and as a type of a prince of a great House." The Prince felt rather restricted by the etiquette of the English Court, and would have preferred not to have been so tied in respect to social matters, but to have enjoyed the sight-seeing and pleasures of London. The Princess of Prussia, however, would not be kept from seeing everything there was to see in London, and going about to the large shops. Her daughter, Princess Luise, made friends very quickly with the Princess Royal. "The two young princesses," says the Countess in a letter describing the first evening on which she found them together, "were charming ; both engaged and almost of the same age, so that one could easily fancy how much they would have to confide to one another, and how happy they were."

"The Princess Royal soon won the hearts of her future father-and-mother-in-law by her sweetness and charm. The Prince finds her taller than he expected from description. She looked particularly well, dressed in white, at a small ball at Court. Her burnt arm was only covered by a light lace scarf, and she let it hang down when dancing. She danced once with her father, a pretty and unusual sight—the youthful and handsome father dancing with his daughter. With her injured arm she was in keeping with many of the company who had been wounded in the Crimea; one had lost a hand, another an arm. The Princess of Prussia only danced when obliged to do so, and talked politics with Lord Clarendon when the Queen was dancing. She kept too much in the shade that evening in my opinion, for she was continually afraid of claiming too much of the Queen's attention. She avoided letting people be presented to her, and it was only with great difficulty that the Prince of Prussia and I succeeded in presenting Herr and Frau von Malaret to her, an honour they greatly desired, and which they had not had in Berlin. The Prince of Prussia and his daughter pleased every one. The former had a long political conversation with Lord Clarendon during the evening, and I heard the latter had spoken in praise of the Prince. The next morning I took my children to show to the Princess of Prussia. I found her very lively and very much delighted with her visit. As the whole Court was going to Osborne I soon took leave of her. Before they left she had driven to Claremont to see Queen Marie Amélie."

The Prince and Princess of Prussia's visit passed off very harmoniously. Little unpleasantnesses were, it is true, not wanting, as they never are in the great world. The Queen, who liked to arrange things in her own way, was rather bent on it with respect to her guests, and

was unwilling to comply with their special wishes. For example, the Prince wished to hear Fräulein Wagner, a Prussian singer at the opera, and told the Queen, who, however, did not fall in with it.

As soon as the royal guests left for Osborne, the Count and Countess went to Ems and Homburg for a short stay.¹ Public opinion in Europe seemed to have entered upon a period of tranquillity, especially since the differences between England and America concerning the treatment of neutral vessels at sea in time of war had been settled on April 10th. Bernstorff trusted that the relations between England and Prussia in the general desire for peace would return to the good old state. His hopes were shattered in September by the outbreak of the dispute about Neuchâtel, which had not been settled at the Congress of Paris. An insurrection of Prussian royalists arose there for the purpose of restoring Prussian rule by force of arms, and was crushed, while the ring-leaders were thrown into prison. People took sides at once with the Republican party at Neuchâtel, and derided Prussia for claiming her rights in that little territory, forgetful of how England herself claimed her smallest rights both at home and abroad. While negotiations were going on Bernstorff had to fight against English intrigues which thwarted Prussia at every step.

"The Neuchâtel affair gave my husband a great deal of annoyance all winter."² Louis Napoleon finally took the matter in hand, and as France has shown us less ill will than England, since the question has arisen, it was

¹ "Prince George of Prussia is one of the four thousand visitors now in this little valley. He particularly distinguishes the actress, Rachel, who is also here, and he dines with her sometimes. She is a great sufferer, and only occasionally appears at her white-curtained windows, when passers-by catch a glimpse of her," writes the Countess.

² Countess Bernstorff's "Reminiscences."

fortunate that it should be taken to Paris. Lord Palmerston and the English Press were violent against us; the Neuchâtel royalists were treated as revolutionaries, and on that ground the existing government was regarded as the lawful one. This attitude of England gave moral support to Switzerland, and on several occasions threatened to bring the negotiations to an end.¹

Copies of two letters from Friedrich Wilhelm IV. to the Queen of England were among Count Bernstorff's papers.

Friedrich Wilhelm IV. to the Queen of England.

"HEILSBERG, ERMLAND, EAST PRUSSIA,

"September 8th, 1856.

"Your Majesty is aware of the fresh misfortune which God has permitted to come upon my down-trodden Neuchâtel. For eight years I have succeeded, though with difficulty, in preventing the revolt of these ill-used people. The London Protocol of May 24th, 1852, has been the dam which stopped the stream. Since my appeal for Neuchâtel, at the Paris Congress, was seen to have little or no effect, there has been a silence, foreboding disaster, and the intention of the 'faithful' to help themselves was matured, and has given birth to the present state of distress.

"Most gracious Queen, I place the weal and woe of this little country in your hands, and in the hands of the European Powers, which have so solemnly recognized my rights and those of the country. It was happy nine years ago, and now it is crushed. Your Majesty may consider that every word of this letter is written with my heart's blood. I ask, I entreat, Your Majesty to support me by demanding the advice of the powers regarding the fate

¹ There is nothing in Count Bernstorff's papers concerning this question, and there is no state paper except these two letters.

of Neuchâtel, in virtue of the Protocol of 1852, and by 'forbidding all and every attack on my faithful subjects and declaring their lives, freedom, and property to be under Your Majesty's protection,' as a consequence of the same Protocol.

"Will Your Majesty turn your eyes towards Geneva? That centre of the Reformed Churches of the Continent is well on its way to becoming a Roman Catholic town, for in those circles the godless destroyers of the old, free state, literally seek and find their abettors. That glance which I beg Your Majesty to bestow will give a vivid picture of the future of Neuchâtel.

"I know that Your Majesty wishes, and I beg God upon my knees to crown Your Majesty's efforts in the affairs of this little country with success. In this hope, which sustains me and my dear Elise in our deep distress, I lay myself at your feet, most gracious Royal Sister, as Your Majesty's deeply attached, faithful Brother and Servant,

"FRIEDRICH WILHELM."

Friedrich Wilhelm IV. to the Queen of England.

"BERLIN, *September 23rd*, 1856.

"Most Gracious and Most Beloved Queen,

"I fear Your Majesty will receive another letter with a shudder. I begin by thanking you with the greatest respect for your kind and gracious reply to my letter about that miserable Neuchâtel question, and I most urgently beg your attention to the short remarks which I now lay at your feet.

"The Neuchâtel question has two essentially different sides. The principal one, that is, the definite settlement of the country, I have placed in the hands of the Great Powers, and all has been accomplished by the London Protocol. The second part only is that for which I entreat Your Majesty's speedy and urgent help.

"I entreat Your Majesty for a powerful and energetic word to the Swiss, so that the Federal Government releases the unfortunate prisoners. Your Majesty's Government is taking steps in the name of humanity against the Neapolitan Government which I regard with hope, as providential for the Neuchâtel question.

"Most gracious Queen, shall England speak for the unfortunate, outraged enemies of a King, and not also speak with the same warmth for the unfortunate friends of a King? This is my request: that your Majesty will at once demand the release of those dear, faithful, but thoughtless men, and threaten the government with the breaking off of diplomatic relations. Most beloved Queen, with my hand upon my heart, am I not more worthy of such great kindness than Poerio and his companions,¹ I, who as a relation of the Royal lady, beg as only a man can beg. One really grave hint will break the chains of my unhappy people, as the prisons were broken in Naples. God the Lord will reward your Majesty a thousandfold for such a blessed act. I shall assign a refuge for my poor subjects in my country till the affair is settled. I am determined and strongly advised to make no terms of any sort until the Swiss Federal Government release the prisoners. This can be enforced by the joint action of Great Britain and France. May Your Majesty not be entreated in vain.

"I kiss your Majesty's hands as my Royal Sister.

"Your faithfully attached Servant and good brother,

"FRIEDRICH WILHELM.

¹ "One day I had the opportunity of a private conversation with the Neapolitan Minister, and I took the occasion to make a strong intercession in favour of Poerio, the famous political prisoner, of whose treatment such horrors were related, and I obtained a promise that he (the Minister) would do all he could to obtain his liberty, on the ground that he gave his Government more trouble in prison than he would out of it, which fact I pressed upon him. He afterwards redeemed his promise, and Poerio was released. . . ." ("Memoirs of an Ex-Minister," by the Earl of Malmesbury.)

"P.S.—I must have recourse to the unseemliness of a postscript in order to beg Your Majesty to pardon the slips in this letter, which I was obliged to write hurriedly at night when in great anxiety and before starting on a long journey. And also in the midst of the wedding festivities of the dear, young Baden couple. I should not have the face to send Your Majesty such a disgraceful sheet if I had a moment's time. I embrace the dear Prince and my dear godchild, and send my kindest regards to the Princess Royal, upon whom our House and country place such hopes.

"Once again permit me to ask Your Majesty, for the sake of justice in comparison to the Neapolitan affair, and for the sake of the dignity of the British Cabinet, to have my legitimate subjects recognized, and to have the unfortunate men in Neuchâtel released. May God help you to do this."

It is a fact that the King found Louis Napoleon willing to meet his wishes. The letter which the King addressed to the Emperor made a deep impression on him. Deciding to prevent war, and to oblige Prussia at the same time, he applied to Berne in favour of the Royalist prisoners. His pride was touched by the obstinacy with which the Swiss rejected his first remonstrances. They became more yielding to his threats and the preparations for war in Prussia, in spite of Lord Palmerston's opposition, till the casting vote concerning the fate of Neuchâtel was given at the Congress of Paris. The King obtained all that was possible, but he had to renounce the loyal country.¹

Perhaps no renunciation in his stirring life was so hard for him as this. He clung with all his strength to Neuchâtel, whose people he loved, and whose beautiful country appealed to his artistic nature. His letters concerning this question to Queen Victoria cannot, even now, be read

¹ See note, Vol. I., p. 53.

without deep feeling. They are the cry of a wounded soul.

Prince Friedrich Wilhelm was sent to Paris to convey the King's thanks, and he made the journey via England, so that he might be present at the celebration of the Princess Royal's birthday. Just at this time the Queen's half-brother, the Prince of Leiningen, died.

"It was a great sorrow to the Royal Family, and the Queen's grief was beyond description.¹ She cried a great deal, but controlled herself when receiving our Prince Friedrich Wilhelm. . . . The Princess Royal seemed overcome with grief, and spent two days on a sofa bathed in tears, which greatly excited the Prince's sympathy.² He told me that the King had written a most charming birthday letter to the Princess, and she also received a very touching letter from Queen Elizabeth, which made her cry. The Prince was somewhat troubled at her extreme sensitiveness, and in terror of the moment when he should take her from her family."

During this visit of the Prince it was decided that the marriage should be announced to Parliament in the spring.

"In November we spent a few days with Lord and Lady Clarendon. The Grove is not far from London. It is not a castle, but an extremely comfortable, well-warmed house, which is celebrated for its large and fine collection of pictures, among which are many Vandykes. This collection comes down from the celebrated Lord Chancellor Clarendon, the grandfather of two English Queens, Mary and Anne. His daughter married the Duke of York, who after his first wife's death became James II. The portraits of the two Queens, of the King, and of the great

¹ Countess Bernstorff's "Reminiscences."

² "I can well understand what Vicky must have suffered, as it could not be expected that Fritz Wilhelm could quite understand her grief."—"Queen Victoria's Letters," vol. iii., p. 277. By permission of the Editors.—Tr.,

Chancellor and of other contemporaries, all hang here. There is a portrait of Frederick the Great, presented by him to the great-uncle of the present Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. That King also bestowed upon him the Prussian title of Freiherr, Lord Clarendon being the English Minister at Berlin and a contemporary of the King.

"We met at The Grove Lord and Lady Shelburne, Lord Palmerston (he was there without his wife, as she was not well), the Sardinian Minister, the Portuguese Minister, Lord Clarendon's brother, Charles Villiers, and Signor Panizzi, the Chief Librarian of the British Museum, who was very agreeable. During our whole visit Lord Clarendon showed us marked attention. He knew how to conceal his antipathy towards Prussia, which he shares with all England. My husband had a long conversation with him on politics the morning after our arrival, and one evening he and Lord Palmerston stayed up with him till two o'clock in the morning, discussing the Neuchâtel question, still unsettled."

Lord Palmerston, as the Countess writes, evinced himself on that occasion as the bitter opponent of Prussian policy. Even there, at The Grove, where he was a guest as well as Count and Countess Bernstorff, he gave full swing to his animosity towards Prussia. In the heat of the discussion he lost his habitual calm, and even Lord Clarendon did so once, but his argument was utterly defeated. An interesting episode occurred about that time, which appeared in all the English newspapers in the following form:—"It is said that his Excellency the Prussian Minister gave a ready reply to an utterance of Lord Clarendon's, when they were discussing the Neuchâtel question. The English Secretary for Foreign Affairs said: "I cannot comprehend why there should be so many words wasted about this subject. The question is quite simple,

and could be solved by any good schoolboy. If one were asked what is Neuchâtel, he would say 'a Swiss town.' 'Yes,' retorted Bernstorff, 'and it would be the same thing if you were to ask a German schoolboy 'What is Gibraltar?' He would answer, 'a Spanish town.' Lord Clarendon will probably not repeat his argument! . . ."

The Prince of Prussia discusses the conclusion of the Neuchâtel question by letter. He had been painfully moved during the negotiations, and would willingly have drawn his sword for the rights of Prussia, but he knew the difficulty of her position and the disfavour in which she was regarded by the Great Powers, and how small a chance there was of help from England. He resigned himself to the inevitable, and considered it fortunate to have got out of the affair without disaster.

The Prince of Prussia to Count Bernstorff.

"BERLIN, February 6th, 1857.

"I write the above with shame when I think that it is in answer to the kind greetings of January 1st, but the mass of answers, the desire to write to you with my own hand, and the influenza which I have had for seventeen days have made it impossible to proceed with these lines. Accept my sincere thanks for your kind sympathy with me on my jubilee. You add to the number of those who value that event too highly. I gladly accept the recognition of my honest goodwill, but what I have been able to do is little compared with the length of my service. It saddened me greatly at the celebration on January 1st not to be permitted to add to my achievements in the campaign now contemplated.

"I am very sorry for the army that we are not to take up arms, but in other respects I am glad that we are out of this stormy question without war. Now it is for political

skill at home to bring the affair to a speedy end. I hope that the unfriendly action of England against us, which was founded on distrust, may not prove to have been right or justified. The unworthy desires of a certain party here are beyond belief.

"Before the seat of judgment one might, perhaps, give certain assurances as not binding; before the judgment of conscience surely not, and it is to be hoped that the 'Kreuz-Zeitung' party will not misuse their Sovereign so far.

"Your

"PRINCE OF PRUSSIA."

At the beginning of the year 1857 Count and Countess Bernstorff were made happy by the birth of a daughter, who received the name of Victoria, after the Princess Royal, who graciously became the child's godmother. The Princess's letter accepting the sponsorship was written in German, and she sealed it with red, notwithstanding her mourning, which the Countess greatly appreciated.¹

"BUCKINGHAM PALACE, *March 16th*, 1857.

"Dear Countess Bernstorff,

"I hasten with pleasure to tell you that my parents permit me to fulfil Count Bernstorff's wish that I should stand godmother to your little daughter. The pleasure of

¹ The Count and Countess very much wished to ask this favour, but were doubtful whether the Queen would consent, notwithstanding her great personal friendliness, lest it should be deemed, by the public, a political demonstration in favour of Prussia. Count Bernstorff, therefore, consulted Prince Friedrich Wilhelm by letter, but before he answered Count Bernstorff was invited to dinner at Court, where the opportunity of making his request came about, when the Princess inquired after the new baby. She exclaimed that it would be her first godchild. Upon this, Bernstorff spoke to Prince Albert, who was most kind about it, and the next morning the Countess received the Princess Royal's letter.

filling this office is all the greater, as I know that my fiancé is your son's godfather.

"With best wishes for you and for my future godchild,
 "I am yours always, with sincere friendship,
 "VICTORIA."

The christening took place on June 8th, when the Princess Royal most kindly assumed her duties. The Queen was not present, because she wished her daughter to have the first place on the occasion, but Prince Albert was there. The Queen graciously delayed the baptism of her own child,¹ born in April, so that the Count's child should be the Princess Royal's first godchild. The baptism was performed by royal permission, at the Count's house in the presence of the different sponsors.² The Princess Royal and her father remained after the ceremony, pleasantly conversing with the guests. The Countess in her account of the ceremony remarks how very English the Prince Consort had become in his whole tone of thought. Talking about German and English customs, he expressed preference for the English customs as more "dignified and reasonable," while German usages often had a touch of sentimentality. He was called in the English Press a "foreigner," with great injustice, as the Countess thought.

"The Queen recovered surprisingly soon," writes the Countess, "from her confinement. She had been in a room

¹ Princess Beatrice Marie Victoria Feodora was born April 14th, 1857, and was married in 1885 to Prince Henry of Battenberg. When the Queen was told that she had given birth to a girl, she exclaimed: "How glad I am that it is a girl."

² Count and Countess Bernstorff had originally intended to ask the Princess Royal as the only sponsor. But the Queen did not wish this, so several ladies were asked to stand, among them Lady Clarendon, the wife of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The Princess Royal sent a silver cup designed by Prince Albert.

during the first days which was very slightly heated, so that Dr. Wegner, the future medical attendant of the Princess Royal, who had been present, in order to learn the usual methods of treatment in England, said that he was 'really frozen.' On the third day the Queen had herself rolled into the next room in a specially constructed bed, to 'breathe another atmosphere,' while her bedroom was aired. She got on so well that she was able to go to the Isle of Wight in a month to get up her strength, although the doctors thought she was not so well able to bear the journey as usual. She attributed this to the nervous excitement occasioned by the Crimean War. She kept this under, and at all events, she made the whole journey in one day, inspected the troops at Portsmouth, including the guns, and on her arrival at Osborne, drove about the park."

Meantime grave events were engaging public attention. War had been declared between China and England, and the differences in opinion on the crisis led to a discussion, on Cobden's motion, in Parliament, on March 4th, 1857, when the Government gained a victory by a small majority of only sixteen.¹ Lord Palmerston decided upon a dissolution; he had governed till this time with the House elected when Lord Derby was Prime Minister. The general election began under great excitement. The new House met on April 30th.

"The negotiations concerning Prince Friedrich Wilhelm's marriage began just then," writes the Countess. "My husband heard from Berlin that he might begin the preliminaries, and the last marriage contracts of the Princes of the House of Prussia were sent to him. Lord Clarendon received them with much interest, and delivered the last marriage contracts of the English Royal Family to my

¹ On the contrary, "the Government was beaten."—Tr.

husband. Among these was that of the Queen, in which it was seen that the annual income settled upon Prince Albert only amounted to £30,000. This contract was signed by the English Ministers, and by Herr von Stockmar, on behalf of the Prince. During these negotiations it was agreed that the engagement of Prince Friedrich Wilhelm and the Princess Royal should be announced in Berlin and London on the same day; in London, by a Message to both Houses of Parliament, and in Berlin, in the 'Staatsanzeiger.' A Cabinet Council, at which her Majesty made the announcement, was held a few days previously, and on May 10th the Lord Chancellor read the Queen's Message in the House of Lords.

"A few difficulties had still to be settled, one being the title which the Princess Royal was to bear in the Prussian announcement. The first draft, made in Berlin, did not give the Princess her correct title, which annoyed Prince Albert, and he wrote rather a sharp letter to Prince Friedrich Wilhelm, and sent a copy of it to my husband, who at once wrote to Berlin not to translate the title, but to give it in the exact English words, 'Princess Royal.' It would have been preferred in London for her to have had the title of 'Crown Princess,' but our King objected to this title. These differences were settled at last, and the engagement was announced in both places. Some lively debates took place in Parliament, and discussions in the Press, but the Queen's popularity won the victory over the antagonistic feeling against Prussia throughout the country, as well as over the economical considerations. A few unknown members of Parliament took occasion to discuss the marriage project, but their objections were too silly to be noticed.

"The Queen was much praised in Parliament, and stress was laid on the order and economy of her house-

hold in comparison with those of her predecessors, who were always in debt. Disraeli distinguished himself by a patriotic speech, in which he spoke favourably of Prussia, and the result was that an annual sum of £8000, asked for by the Minister, was granted, with a capital of £40,000. I spoke to Lord Clarendon's brother, Mr. Charles Villiers, the same day, and he told me that on hearing Disraeli's speech they had said that he had probably been dining with the Bernstorffs. Villiers added that Disraeli was known to be a great courtier, and that he himself had said last year, when I presented Disraeli to Prince Friedrich Wilhelm: 'How wise that is of Madame de Bernstorff.' After the grant had been settled, and the Queen quite recovered, the Court returned to London on June 5th, at which date the season had been fixed to begin.

"Prince Friedrich Wilhelm arrived at Windsor soon after for a few days' stay, and after him the Archduke Maximilian of Austria, who was engaged to Princess Charlotte of Belgium. The Queen had wished to make his acquaintance before his marriage. He had come by sea from Trieste. . . . On the 17th my husband and I dined at Court with the Archduke. He was uncommonly agreeable, and he pleased the English Royal Family very much. He was friendly towards us, greeting us as old acquaintances, and his whole manner was a proof to us that kinder feelings were entertained for my husband at Vienna than one could have supposed after his recall in 1851."

Count Bernstorff gave a large ball in honour of the Queen and the young couple, a brilliant affair long remembered in London society. There were some trifling alterations made in the Legation for the occasion, and it was beautifully decorated. The Queen's dressing-room which was

absolutely necessary, was a small marquee put up in the Chancellery, and made of delicate colours, decorated with flowers. The upper rooms were magnificently arranged, as the Countess describes them. There was a sort of throne for the Queen in one room, at the back of which hung a heavy red curtain, decorated with the English crown in gold with the Prussian eagles in the cornice. The arm-chair for the Queen had the English arms embroidered in red satin, and there were smaller chairs at the side for the Royal Family. Seventeen thousand lamps illuminated the front of the house. Mention is made of some amusing episodes in connection with the preparations.

"The afternoon before the ball," writes the Countess, "Lord Breadalbane,¹ appeared, in order to see if everything had been arranged as requested. In his usual solemn voice he gravely asked me, with an air of anxious importance, whether the Queen's chair was of the correct height. It sounded as if he were convinced that if the chair was not quite comfortable he would be made responsible. After we had satisfied him on that score he asked whether there would be 'plenty of air'? We pointed out to him that every precaution had been taken for that end, that all doors and windows had been removed, and we dreaded too great a draught. Notwithstanding this, he insisted upon our removing the last window, which was over the dais for the Queen. Hardly had Lord Breadalbane left us before Lord Ernest Bruce² arrived to make the same inquiries. We could not help laughing at the fear the Court officials evidently had of the Queen, a fear which, according to my personal observations, is not justified.

"The evening came at last, and we waited for the

¹ Lord Chamberlain.—Tr.

² Vice-Chamberlain.—Tr.

Queen's arrival. She would not lay aside her mourning, and wore black, with lilac flowers, which I regretted, because it obliged me to appear in half mourning. The house began to fill by degrees ; the Princes appeared and were taken to one of the rooms downstairs. The Queen made us wait a little, and it was only about ten o'clock when her arrival was announced. Her arrival was a beautiful sight. Her Majesty was escorted by her splendid Life Guards, and their cuirasses glittered in the light of the brilliant illuminations. After the usual salutations, the Queen took my husband's arm to the door of the dressing-room, preceded by the Court officials, and I followed on the arm of the Count of Flanders, while Prince Albert led the Princess Charlotte, and our Prince his fiancée. The Prince von Hohenzollern gave his arm to the Duchess of Sutherland. The Duchess of Cambridge only arrived much later, and was received by Count von Brandenburg.

"The Queen entered the dressing-room with the Princesses, and expressed much admiration at it. She looked in the mirror and touched up her hair with the comb, and, when I said I was afraid to present the bouquet I had for her, lest she should have one already, she replied that she had none, and accepted it with a smile. She was most amiable all the evening. She danced several quadrilles with us and laughed at Prince Hohenzollern's blunders, for he had never danced before. Now and then there was a great crush. On such occasions the English are rather awkward, and collect where there are already many people. The Queen took her place on the daïs before which the guests were to have passed, but very few made up their minds to do so, which amused the Queen greatly. For one moment we had a fright when the Queen complained of a draught, and, as things were so arranged that we could only draw the muslin curtains, which were of no use, we did not know what to

suggest; but we were soon set at rest, for she asked to have the only closed window of the large room opened. My husband made his way with much difficulty through the crowd to open it. A few minutes later she called to the Duke of Cambridge that she wished to waltz, which she never does at large balls. When they stood up the Court officials made a sign with their white staves for the guests to make room, and unfortunately the musicians took it for a sign that they were to stop, and this they did just as the Queen was about to begin. They played immediately again, but it was a little awkward for us. It was happily the only contretemps during the evening. We went to the supper room in the same order in which we had entered. It made a charming impression. The illuminations were seen through the windows, and a magnificent full moon lent poetic beauty to the scene. The Queen was served by her pages and footmen, and only the members of the Royal Family and the suite were allowed in the room. The Queen returned to the ballroom after supper and then went to the dressing-room, whither Prince Albert followed her that time. She praised it and the whole house. 'The staircase is the best part of it,' Prince Albert said. She embraced me heartily on leaving, thanked me very kindly, and then entered the carriage while the band played 'God save the Queen.' I confess it was a moment of relief when I saw her Majesty, gay and smiling, drive off in her carriage. The ball was a success in every way, and we could say to each other that our great trouble had been crowned with success. Prince Friedrich Wilhelm also was very much gratified at it."¹

¹ The expenses of the ball amounted to the following sums: The marquee, £212 17s.; the throne, £111 6s.; the dressing-room, £122; the flowers, £180; the supper, £202; the music, £46; the lighting of the rooms, £14 10s.; the illuminations, £314 16s. The total expenses were £1157 19s.

A letter from the Prince of Prussia bears witness to the lasting impression which had been made by the entertainment.

The Prince of Prussia to Count Bernstorff.

"BADEN, 23/7/1857.

"I thank you heartily for your kind wishes at my promotion to the position of grandpapa.¹ Such brevet rank to old age is borne with pleasure, and all is going on well at Carlsruhe, thank God; mother and child are under the merciful care and blessing of Providence. May they remain so. My son has told me of the success of your ball to the Queen and to the betrothed couple, and we sincerely thank you and your wife for your letter about it. How much I should have liked to have been present. The Queen's late confinement disarranged all our plans. We were to have come at the end of May for the best part of the season, then the dissolution of Parliament came, and the invitation was postponed; the Queen wishing us to come later did not fit in with the Princess's 'cure,' and with my visit to Wildbad, etc. Therefore you will not see us at Prussia House till the wedding, where I, at least, must appear. It is not without anxiety that I am following the events in India. Will the bath of blood and the suppression be enough to restore lasting order there? When that country realizes the material weakness of the mysterious Power that reigns over it, will it still be possible to keep them in slavish submission?² Your opinion would be of value to me.

"Always your

"PRINCE OF PRUSSIA."

¹ The birth of the Hereditary Grand Duke of Baden, Friedrich Wilhelm; born July 9th.

The Indian Mutiny aroused the interest of the whole world.

CHAPTER XIII

MARRIAGE—LORD DERBY'S CABINET, 1857-58

The arrival of Prince Friedrich Wilhelm—His speech at Guildhall—His departure—Serious illness of Friedrich Wilhelm IV.—Fresh difficulties about the marriage contract—Signing the contract—Count Vitzthum—The wedding festivities—The going away of the bridal pair—Dissatisfaction in England with Lord Palmerston—His fall—The Derby Cabinet—The Prince Consort on the Princess Royal's position in Berlin—Count Bernstorff's good relations with all parties in England—The diminution of sympathy in England for France—Persigny's recall—The Duke of Malakoff, French Ambassador to England—Confirmation of the Prince of Wales—Orsini's attempt on the French Emperor's life—Baron Brunnow, Russian Ambassador in London—The conflict of the Western Powers with Naples—Bernstorff's intervention—The Cagliari affair—Lord Malmesbury's foreign policy—The Queen of England in Berlin—The Prince of Prussia's plan to transfer Bernstorff to Vienna—Count and Countess Bernstorff at Knowsley.

THE day arrived when the freedom of the City was conferred upon Prince Friedrich Wilhelm at the Guildhall. This was followed by a luncheon at the Mansion House. The City welcomed the Princess Royal's fiancé in their midst, and were glad to display their ancient customs to him.

"At his appearance in the Guildhall," writes Countess Bernstorff, "the Prince was heartily cheered. Sir John Key, the former Lord Mayor, now an Alderman of the City, made a speech, the first for a long time, in favour of Prussia and its King, praising the King's peaceful intentions, his love of art, and his religious principles, which gave us the greater pleasure, as he has always been misunderstood in England. The Prince spoke in almost too

loud a voice when he made his reply, which did not, therefore, sound well, we thought. But the public were satisfied, because none of his words were lost. He read his speech in English, and he had read it beforehand to his fiancée, in order to get the correct pronunciation. At the breakfast, which takes place at the Mansion House after such functions in the City, the Prince, in reply to his toast, proposed the City of London, the heart of the commercial world. That phrase came from Pertz, the King's librarian, who was in London, and recommended the Prince to use it. This served its object, for it was loudly applauded; but he regretted afterwards that he had used it, because it was not original. I sat, according to the custom in the City, next to my husband, and my other neighbour was Lord Clarendon. We were given the precedence of the other diplomatists on that occasion. After the breakfast we went to see the Bank of England, where we looked at the banknotes being made, as well as at the mass of treasure contained in safes in the walls. They let us take a million pounds in our hands. From there we drove home, where a deputation of Germans awaited the Prince, to whom he made an address. . . ."

The diary alludes to his looks during his visit in London: "He looks well, but rather thin. After the dinner given in honour of the Archduke Max of Austria and Princess Charlotte of Belgium, as we sat at the round table, the Queen criticized the style in which the Prince wears his hair, and regretted that 'he had his cut just before he went to the City.' The Prince does not like such remarks, one saw distinctly. The English Court costume of knee breeches did not suit him very well, and altogether he did not look so well in plain clothes as in uniform, as is, indeed, often the case with German princes.

"We went to the station on the evening of the Prince's

departure. He looked very sad, and was, moreover, very much vexed because he had forgotten his little dog. He begged us urgently to have the little animal sent on to him.¹ Then he talked about his impressions of the day, and said how much pleased he was at his reception in the City. He left London with as much reluctance as his adjutant, Herr von Moltke,² did with joy. That cool, laconic, rather stiff man sprang into the carriage with such a delighted expression that I teased him about it. 'Oh, I am glad to get out of this golden cage,' he hurriedly exclaimed.

"We received a telegram on October 10th, with the news that our King, who had been indisposed for some days, was seriously ill. This news coming direct from Manteuffel, the gravity of which could not be doubted, caused great anxiety and alarm in the house.

"The despatch was so expressed that one could but anticipate the worst. The first symptoms were congestion of the brain and great weakness. The despatch ended by desiring us to unite our prayers with those of Prussia, for the preservation of our much-loved King's precious life. We should have preferred to have gone to Berlin at once, and we broke up our Brighton household directly, so that we might be able to leave at a moment's notice. We were back in our old place in town on October 14th.

"We met Sir Culling and Lady Eardley soon after at

¹ The little dog was brought to the Count shortly after, and the Countess writes: "It gave us a good deal of trouble, as well as to the Prussian Messenger, who had to take it with him. It howled unceasingly, and it was so miserable at being separated from its master that it would not eat. We were happy on hearing that the Prince at last had it back."

² Hellmuth Karl Bernhard, Count von Moltke, afterwards the celebrated Field-Marshal, was born at Parchim on October 26th, 1800, and died in Berlin on April 24th, 1891. He was a Major-General at the time of his visit to London, and first Adjutant on the staff of the Prince.

the country-place of the Lord Chancellor and Lady Cranworth, to whom we paid a short visit. . . . The Eardleys were very much pleased with their stay in Berlin, and which they had left before the King's illness. Sir Culling had seen the King several times, and could not speak too highly of his admirable character. He had gone to attend the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in Berlin, the object of which is to unite all Protestants. My husband had taken a great deal of trouble about the affair in England, more than Bunsen had taken, Eardley said, (which was, indeed, true) notwithstanding the King had invited Bunsen to Berlin for it, and not my husband. People were there from all parts of Europe, and even America had sent a strong contingent. The character of the King was that of a righteous man, and Sir Culling could not comprehend why such false ideas about him and his intentions were held in England. He promised to fight against the prejudice with all his might, but, unfortunately, good Sir Culling can hardly be regarded as a suitable person, for he himself is not very popular in England."

The Count and Countess spent a short time at the end of October with their friend, Mr. Baring. The Countess was not, however, well while there. She contracted a cold and a bad cough, and though she did not exhibit any anxiety, she felt uneasy about her health. At last they made the long, unpleasant journey back to town.

The news from Berlin was more gloomy, and the King's sufferings continued, so that it was necessary to have some one to represent him in political affairs. The Prince of Prussia was provisionally empowered on October 3rd for three months. Under these circumstances Prince Friedrich Wilhelm could not go to Windsor in October, and it was doubtful whether he would be able to go for the Princess Royal's birthday in November. When the King's con-

dition was pronounced to be better he adhered to his arrangements.

Bernstorff had proceeded with the preparations of the marriage contract, which had been interrupted in the middle of August. Certain alterations were desired in Berlin, especially those relating to the return of the Princess Royal to England in the event of her becoming a widow. The Prince of Prussia had made a proposal concerning this in September, which is among the Bernstorff papers.

The Prince of Prussia to Count Bernstorff.

[Autograph letter.]

"CÖLN, 5/9/57.

"Your kind communications about affairs in India have interested me uncommonly. I believe that so long as the military rising there is not shared by the people it can be put down by the European strength. But it will be at the cost of much shedding of blood, and much money, and after that things will be difficult.

"You have long since received the marriage contract counter project, and have, perhaps, concluded the negotiations, as the Queen wished it settled before she left for Scotland. I had had some important objections laid before the King, which he did not share. It was this withdrawal of the whole 'appanage' on the possible return to England of the widow, and the addition to the stipulation that the children in such an event should remain in Prussia during their minority. Thus I was for retaining the English draft of the contract, that the children, besides retaining their deceased mother's fortune, should retain the Prussian 'appanage,' whilst omitting that clause, might arouse distrust, however unjustly. As for the rest, I was in agreement with the Prussian counter project, and am anxious to hear how it has been arranged.

"I was afraid that as your journey to the baths was so much delayed there would hardly be any good of it, which I greatly regret for your wife's sake, to whom I desire to be specially remembered, while I remain

"Your

"PRINCE OF PRUSSIA."

"Continual distrust was felt in London about the settlement of the marriage contract and a certain irritation against Prussia, while in Berlin there was apathy and procrastination," the Countess writes. "I omit the details of these deliberations, which were drawn out at great length, and gave my husband a good deal of work. He had to do with two Ministers in Berlin, and in London Lord Clarendon had to obtain the Queen's consent and that of all the Ministers for every alteration. But all difficulties were happily arranged at last. The Princess Royal receives an income of £8000 for her own exclusive use, and the interest of the £40,000 is for the joint expenses of their household. My husband carried out all that was desired in Berlin, but I think that people who read the marriage contract can have no idea what trouble it has cost him. . . ."

When Prince Friedrich Wilhelm arrived in Windsor on November 17th, the Count and Countess received an invitation for the Princess's birthday on the 21st, when she would be seventeen years old. The Duke of Cambridge was the only other guest. The Duchess de Nemours, the "Sunbeam" of the unfortunate exiled Royal Family at Claremont, died in the bloom of her youth and beauty shortly after her confinement of a daughter. "The Queen and Prince Albert," writes Countess Bernstorff, "hardly spoke of anything else but the death of the Duchess, for Prince Albert looked on her as a sister, as they were brought up together. The Queen, as the Princess Royal

told us, saw her on her death-bed smiling as if in sleep, with her lovely fair hair falling about her. The cause of her death is said to be owing to the insanitary condition of Claremont, which has already claimed several victims. . . . Our Prince said to me that much as he deplored the sad event, he was glad to find the Court living quietly without society, as it was in harmony with his own feelings. He was very much depressed about the trying state of affairs at home. He received detailed reports of the King every day. He had left Sanssouci, which was too cold in winter, and gone to Charlottenburg."

There is a very bright description of the young Prince of Wales in the Countess's notebook: Count and Countess Bernstorff saw him at a small evening party which had been given in honour of the Princess Royal. "The Prince of Wales," she writes, "wore the Windsor uniform for the first time, which did not become him particularly well. He talked of the pleasure and interest of his journey to Germany, where he remained for two months at Königswinter on the Rhine. He had had instruction at Bonn, and made numerous trips in the neighbourhood which he greatly enjoyed, and then after a visit to the Princess of Prussia at Coblenz, he had gone to Switzerland. General Grey had been with him at first, but later on he was replaced by General W. Codrington, and this had been disapproved of by the English Press. Several papers said that General Codrington had other things to do so long as the Mutiny in India lasted than be Governor to a young prince. They forgot that this young prince would be King of England one day, and that his training could only be entrusted to distinguished persons, because it would be of the greatest importance to the country. People in Germany were very much pleased with the Prince of Wales, and he gained very much in manner while abroad, as well as in every

other way. Some Eton boys had accompanied him at the Queen's desire, chosen from the families of the aristocracy without regard to political parties. I always admire the wisdom and care with which the royal children are brought up. Of course all that is best is at the command of such personages, but all parents are not as judicious and sensible as the Queen and Prince Consort. The Prince of Wales has better and more regular features than his eldest sister, but he still looks rather delicate and boyish. One must hope that he will grow and become stronger. His expression is gentle and friendly, his smile particularly pleasant; it reminds me of his mother. The Queen regrets very much that he is so short."¹

The Queen's other children made a very favourable impression on the Countess:

"Princess Helena seems very wide awake and intelligent; Princess Louise is much quieter. She told me in German about her lessons, as well as about her daily occupations, and I could only praise the good use she made of her time. All the Queen's children are brought up very simply. The Princess Royal, who is to be married in six weeks, has not got a separate room, but has one with her sisters. When I wanted to congratulate her on her birthday, at the castle, I was told that she could not be seen. Later on the Prince informed me that she could not receive me because she did not have a room of her own. She excused herself after dinner in these words: 'I could not ask you to come in because my room was not tidy, as all the children were there.' After lunch, when

¹ A few months later Count and Countess Bernstorff were present at the confirmation of the Prince of Wales: "The ceremony was very solemn and touching," the Countess writes. "The Prince answered the questions in a clear, firm voice. When I congratulated the Prince after the service, he asked me in a tone that touched me: 'Do you think that the King (his godfather) knows that my confirmation is to-day, and will think of me?'"

the Queen had retired, and we were awaiting further commands in the gallery, Princess Beatrice was brought to us by the Queen's order. She is a very pretty little child. Her nurse, who pleased me very much, told me that the Princess suffers from teething, but is otherwise good and sweet. The little one has to go to the Queen twice a day, and she evinces a decided preference for her father, who dances her on his knees, to the delight of the other children. We then took a walk alone in that part of the beautiful park which is reserved for the Royal Family, and turned our steps towards the kennels. We saw the large Newfoundland, which is the favourite with the family. Queen Victoria, who was walking in the park with her husband, our Prince and the children, came rather later than we did: she let the dog, which is her constant companion, out in the park, and the family, followed by that magnificent creature, made an idyllic picture. . . .

"The Queen has not yet given up her habit of treating the Princess like a child. She does not find it easy to have an engaged daughter who is obliged to divide her time between her fiancé and so many extremely serious and necessary studies, and according to the Queen's view, the Princess Royal's education is not finished. She said to me in a very convinced tone one day that she would never again permit this sort of twofold relation with another daughter. She would have rendered the position easier for herself and the Prince if she had let the Prince have a little more liberty, and allowed him to have seen more of the beautiful scenery of England, with its ancient buildings and art treasures. There would then have been no shadows for him during his visits to England. He was often bored because he did not have what he had expected. He could only see his fiancée at certain hours, and yet was not permitted to make use of his time for

other things in the intervals. He either remained alone, or was in the large family circle, and this was not according to his mind. Besides this, he was annoyed that all the arrangements for his marriage and future life were settled with his mother and not with him, as for instance, the appointment of his future household. . . . The Princess wished for more freedom as much as he did. She felt oppressed by her mother's arrangements, and was more drawn to her father, who had devoted himself to her education, and whose temperament agreed more with hers. Although the thought of being separated from her family troubled her, she looked forward impatiently to her marriage. In the summer, after the Prince had left, she said to me: 'Oh, wish with me that these months may pass quickly.' And to the Duchess of Wellington she said that she would like to sleep away the weeks till her marriage.

"The time till the day of the great solemnity passed only too fast for my husband and myself. He and Lord Clarendon and others who were authorized to sign the marriage contract did so on December 18th. The ratifications had to be exchanged as quickly as possible. . . . As was so often the case, the Press in England did all it could to alarm public opinion, and tried to create dislike to the marriage. They grumbled that so much good English money found its way over to Prussia on this occasion. They also complained that the wedding was not to take place in Westminster Abbey, but in the Chapel Royal, St. James's Palace, which had to be prepared for the ceremony at great expense, and had, besides, no room for the public. The Queen and Princess Royal were popular in England, notwithstanding all this, while all the antipathy was directed against Prince Albert and Prussia, both he and our country being always to blame. Fortun-

ately the better feeling predominated, and thanks to the good impression our young Prince made, a genuine regard for the young couple was soon entertained."

The wedding, a brilliant affair, took place on January 25th, 1858.

Besides the invitations to the bridegroom's family, the Queen also invited the King of the Belgians, the Duke and Duchess of Brabant, the Count of Flanders, the Grand Duke and Duchess of Baden, the Duke of Saxe Coburg, Prince and Princess Hohenlohe Langenburg, Prince Victor of Hohenlohe Langenburg, etc. Only Prince Victor of these latter relations came to the wedding. The Prussian Princes made an excellent impression in England.

"Prince Friedrich Karl," writes the Countess, "I had not seen for a long time, and I found him looking less well than formerly. His teeth and hair had suffered during these years, and he had got stouter. But he has a mild, pleasant expression, which surprised me, for he has the reputation of being generally hard and rough. He is very strict as to due observance of customs, but is simple in his habits, though almost too stern in his military duties. The amiability he displayed here people are unaccustomed to in Berlin. He pleased the Queen and Princess Royal greatly, and after dinner they spoke appreciatively about him. . . ."

The Countess describes the marriage service as follows:—

"It was a very touching sight when the Queen entered the chapel with her seven children, leading the youngest by the hand; she took the place arranged for her and the other princes. Many thought her entry too theatrical, and said it reminded them of 'Norma' with her children. But I thought it all very pretty and in keeping with the Queen's character. . . . She looked pale and sad, but self-controlled, like one struggling with strong emotion, and one divined

the mother beneath the Sovereign. . . . The Prince of Prussia and the Prince Consort accompanied the bridegroom, who looked calm and happy. He went up to the dais at once and bowed to the Queen and his mother, and then after kneeling before the altar for a moment stood with the rest of the party, his eyes turned towards the door, through which his bride entered with her father and the King of the Belgians; the organ played meanwhile. The Princess was very pale, but very composed, and her innocent, unaffected expression was charming. Her white dress, with which she wore no jewels, except a diamond necklace and bracelet, and the eight white-robed young girls behind her, bearing her train of white silk trimmed with orange flowers, made a maidenly picture which went to the heart, and contrasted agreeably with the brilliant toilets of the other ladies.¹ Then the ceremony began, and after a simple and effective anthem by the choir, composed in 1599, the Archbishop addressed the usual questions to the bridegroom, who answered in a loud, distinct voice. The soft silver tones of the Princess Royal, although somewhat low, were quite clearly heard, and I could understand every word. Nothing had been altered in the form of the service, and the Archbishop asked quite simply 'Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?' and the Prince Consort stepped forward and said in a loud voice 'I do.' Then Prince Friedrich Wilhelm took his bride's hand and repeated slowly and clearly the solemn and significant words after the Archbishop: 'I, Frederick William Nicholas Charles, take thee, Victoria Adelaide Marie Luise, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better

¹ The Countess thought all the young girls looked too pale, because they had had to wait too long in a room without a fire. While they were waiting, the Princess Royal had been very bright, and had said that if she fainted she could be carried out in her train.

for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth.' The Prince then turned to his father, who handed him the ring, which he placed on his wife's finger. The Princess repeated the same formula, making the same promises to her husband. Only the wife wears a wedding ring in England. The Prince wished to have one also, and when it was decided that the wedding should take place in London according to the English ritual, the Prince Consort assured him that his wish could easily be fulfilled. I asked the Archbishop how he had arranged about the ring, and he smilingly replied, 'I only saw one, but if two had been there I would have managed it.' The English marriage service has many hard and not very pleasant words, leaving no doubts about the marriage duties, but the whole service is solemn in the greatest degree, and I thought, too, the formula very beautiful, expressive, and clear.

"After the prayers were over, the Princess Royal went to her mother and made a movement as if she would kneel, but the Queen raised and warmly embraced her. She did the same to her father, and then turned to her father- and mother-in-law. She would have kissed her father-in-law's hand, but he would not suffer this, and tenderly kissed hers. Meanwhile Prince Friedrich Wilhelm had gone to his parents. His mother thought she might not embrace him there, so she only gave him her hand, while his father pressed him affectionately to his heart. . . . The most interesting scene, perhaps, was enacted in the throne-room, where the family, surrounded by a limited circle, gave expression to their feelings of affection and happiness. The Princess Friedrich Wilhelm, looking at her husband with beaming eyes, exclaimed, 'I am really married now!' He called her, with strong emphasis on the words, 'My wife,'

adding that he could not believe in his happiness at all, nor that this was his wedding. Then with triumph he showed us his ring, made out of Silesian gold.

"The Royal Family breakfasted alone with their royal guests. The other guests breakfasted in the hall below. The young couple left about four o'clock for Windsor, and were heartily greeted by the people. The Eton boys took the horses out of the carriage and drew it up to the castle, a proof of friendship which did not greatly gratify the Prince. London was illuminated in the evening and there was a large Court concert. Most of the royal guests left the next day.

"We were invited to Windsor on Thursday for the Prince's state investiture of the Order of the Garter, a ceremony which greatly interested me. The costume of the Order is very beautiful—a long, flowing velvet mantle worn over the usual dress. Our Prince appeared in uniform, but in knee breeches. The two youngest knights led him into the hall, and there the Queen fastened the Garter below his knee, and placed the Blue Ribbon across his shoulder. The assembled knights walked backwards out of the hall, a difficult performance in a long mantle. Lord Clarendon and Lord Abercorn did it with the greatest skill. It was trying to the Prince to receive an Order which his father did not have. They set up the fiction that he was descended from George II. so as to be able to confer this distinction upon him. It gave us much pleasure to see the young couple again, and beaming with happiness. The Princess had already quite a bearing, and the Queen treated her daughter with great tact and in a different manner, making her sit by her on the sofa, wear a shawl in going through the cold passages, etc., which would not have been the case before her marriage.

"There were receptions, theatre-going, a small dance

and a large dinner at Court, and so on up to the last day, a very sad one for the Queen and family, and it seemed as if the heavens wished to join in their grief. It was dark and dull, and snow fell in large flakes, an unusual spectacle for London. This departure from the Royal Palace gave an impression of great sadness. The Queen desired that there should not be too much show of feeling when good-bye was said, but this was of no avail. The Sovereign herself wept bitterly, forgetting the Queen in the mother. Many present said to me afterwards that it was like a funeral. Every one cried. The Princess Royal embraced her little brothers and sisters again and again, and then threw herself into her mother's arms. Prince Friedrich Wilhelm's manner won great praise. He spoke encouragingly to his wife, and was not at all annoyed at the general sorrow. He said with much warmth to Lady Churchill, who was to accompany them to Germany: 'You will be a comfort to her; you will talk to her about England, and you will be a part of her home.' At last the time came to enter the carriage and leave.

"In spite of the bad weather an open carriage was chosen to please the people. The Princess, her eyes red from crying, with her veil down, and exposed to the snow, bowed as much as she could to the crowd which had not been frightened away by the bad weather. The travellers entered the carriage as soon as they reached the much-decorated station, and left for Gravesend, where another great crowd, and numerous deputations, awaited them. The Prince Consort went with his daughter to her state room, while the rest of the party lunched with Lord Sydney. The young Princess did not appear again. The Queen told me much later that the parting had been heart-rending. The Princess assured her that when her father left the boat she had but one wish, and that was

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that the boat might sink. She thought her heart would break. The Prince Consort and the young Princes left the boat in tears. Prince Friedrich Wilhelm remained on deck till the party had left the boat. He heartily thanked my husband for all he had done for him when he said good-bye. Then the signal was given for departure, and the superb royal yacht began to move off, followed by a small flotilla for a short distance. The steamers soon vanished in the snow-storm."

The Princess was received everywhere in Prussia with jubilations, and Count and Countess Bernstorff soon heard that her amiability and fresh young manner won all hearts, and the antipathy against "the Englishwoman" was finally put to flight. The Prince Regent gave Bernstorff an account of the impression the Princess made in her new home.

The Prince of Prussia to Count Bernstorff.

"BERLIN, April 2nd, 1857.

"Accept my sincere thanks for your kind remembrance of my birthday, and for your good wishes. I begin to walk better and am able to move about the room with the help of my stick.

"My daughter-in-law continues to excite universal attention, and has already made herself a position. She is altogether popular, and gains daily in every one's esteem.

"The Ministerial catastrophe in London is not a pleasant episode in a constitutional Government.¹ I look upon the momentary entente just as you do. I do not anticipate any crisis at present, as they need each other.

"The King's condition slowly improves. It is a matter of course that the interregnum is protracted, and it seems

¹ The fall of Lord Palmerston's Government, of which more hereafter.

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as if the Houses would have the tact to be silent about the whole matter.

"I have seen your account of the confirmation¹ and sent it on to Charlottenburg to-day.

"Remember me most kindly to the Countess.

"Your

"PRINCE OF PRUSSIA."

Lord Palmerston's fall was the result of his policy both at home and abroad. There had been great dissatisfaction throughout the country, and Orsini's attempt on Louis Napoleon's life on January 14th of this year, and the Clanricarde affair proved fatal to his Cabinet. The law against political offenders, which Palmerston carried through Parliament to please the Emperor of the French, excited the indignation of the Liberals, especially as the Bill was only just passed by the aid of the Conservatives. The indignation increased and culminated on the publication of a despatch from Walewski to Persigny on January 20th, in which the latter was urgently requested to demand the cessation of the right of domicile in England permitted to political refugees, who, as criminals, were not entitled to it. The publication of this demand all England pronounced to be "impudence." Milner Gibson brought forward an amendment censuring the Government for not replying to Walewski's despatch before bringing a Bill before the House. The amendment was to be discussed on February 19th. Lord Palmerston confidently hoped for victory, but his own followers left him in the lurch, and he suffered a great defeat. Disraeli gave the decisive blow to him. He called his supporters together and they agreed to vote against the Government. This meant the resignation of the Cabinet. Numerous com-

¹ The Prince of Wales' confirmation, described above.

binations were discussed, and many people mentioned as the next Prime Minister, but Lord Derby's name always came first.

"We chanced to have invited Lord Derby to dine with us on Monday, February 22nd, the invitations having been sent long beforehand without regard to political parties, and Lord Granville and Lord Grey were also invited. We fancied that Lord Derby might be obliged to decline on account of his new duties, but he really came, as Lady Derby had said he would. He looked rather fagged, and begged to be excused for leaving soon after dinner. His presence, the secrecy shrouding his present intentions, the uncertainty of the future, as well as the report that Lord Grey had declined to enter Lord Derby's Cabinet, and that Lord Granville, one of the most distinguished members of the late Government, were both present, gave a great interest to our dinner. Count Lavradio¹ called it a 'historic' dinner. The Duke of Cambridge and the Duke and Duchess d'Aumale also dined with us, but they were in the background on that occasion, for all eyes were turned on Lord Derby. One tried to read his face and to guess from his manner whether or not he had succeeded in forming a Cabinet. The Duke of Cambridge talked a long while to him; Lord Granville tried to learn something from Lady Derby, but she bravely held her ground, and made no indiscreet communication. She told my husband in the course of the evening that she had promised Lord Derby to be silent.

"There were a thousand reports flying about; that the Peelites had refused to join Lord Derby, etc. etc. On Sunday, Lady Derby told me, the Queen had sent for Lord Derby about seven o'clock. He evinced no desire to undertake the government, and prudently said that

¹ Portuguese Minister.—Tr.

he did not have a majority in Parliament, and advised her to send for Lord John Russell, so that he might come to an understanding with Lord Palmerston. He returned home. About eleven o'clock the next morning, when on the door-steps with his wife and daughter on his way to church, he remarked to the former that he presumed the Queen would retain Lord Palmerston as Prime Minister, as she had not sent to him again. But he had only gone a few steps when he met the Queen's Messenger with a letter for him, the contents of which were that he should undertake the formation of a Cabinet. He immediately set to work to do so. Lady Derby said her husband did not desire to be Prime Minister, but his party wished it, and he himself saw that if he declined this time, the Conservative party would not have another chance for a long time. Lord Clarendon also said to me that Lord Derby would rather be the brilliant Leader of the Opposition than bear the burden and responsibility of the Government.

"I must say that I have not experienced anything so interesting in England, as during those weeks. The changes which such a crisis brings are extraordinary, for they extend to Court appointments and the Queen's entourage. Every one who accepts a place in the new Government has to resign his seat in Parliament, and seek re-election. The happy face of one person, and the long one of another, the assurance shown by each party, and the confidence of Lady Palmerston in her husband's 'star,' all interested us extremely.¹ Fortunately we were on good terms with all parties.

¹ Lord Lyndhurst gave the Countess an amusing account of his own retirement from office on a former occasion. He had gone to the Castle wearing the dignity of office. The servants led him through the rooms and addressed him as the Lord Chancellor. But as soon as he had resigned the seals they took

"We called on Lady Palmerston on Tuesday, and found many other callers there. She was very much excited and irritated against Parliament, which had shown her husband the greatest ingratitude. She also thought that if he had remained calmly in his place he could have obtained a vote of confidence, that they would certainly have kept to him, but he preferred to resign because the conduct of Parliament towards him had been so deplorable. She was greatly troubled as to what impression his fall would make in France. In this direction things seemed very black to her, because, as she asserted, her husband's retirement might easily cause a disruption between the two countries. Monsieur and Madame de Persigny were announced while I was there; the former looked much concerned when he came in, and the latter and Lady Palmerston embraced like two people who met for the first time after the loss of some dear relation.

"It was known who were to be the new Ministers on the 25th. Lord Derby's Cabinet was admirably chosen. Lord Malmesbury, a personal friend of the French Emperor, as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, was a guarantee that the relations between England and France would not suffer by the change of Ministers. Lord Ellenborough, as Secretary of State for India, was a more distinguished man than Mr. Vernon Smith, and it was also considered that General Peel promised to be a better Secretary of War than Lord Panmure. It was accounted fortunate that Lord Stanley, Lord Derby's son, who was thought to be more Liberal than his father, consented to become a member of the Government. It had taken several days

him down some narrow stairs, where at the bottom he found a servant who asked in a patronising manner if he should call Lord Lyndhurst's carriage. It is worthy of notice that the Queen, who, as Countess Bernstorff says, preferred the late party to the new one, evinced this in many characteristic details.

to induce him to consent, and it was his mother who had brought about the happy event. With this exception the Government was a purely Conservative one. Not a single Peelite had entered it. Gladstone would gladly have done so,¹ but the other Peelites protested against it. Although Disraeli was not liked at Court or in society, he possessed brains and talent, and people recognized that he must be unavoidably a member of the Tory Cabinet. Lord Eglinton became Viceroy of Ireland.

"The only rather doubtful choice of Lord Derby's was in having made the Duchess of Manchester Mistress of the Robes in place of the Duchess of Sutherland. Every one was irritated at it, and none the less because she was a German by birth. I, too, thought it was not a happy choice; but still, I must say that it amused me to look on at the political passions which governed people. One declared that she was the daughter of a bookseller, another, that of a schoolmaster, while in point of fact she was Countess von Alten. They said she spoke bad English, that her husband was only an insignificant Duke. Intellectually she was not distinguished, but she was very handsome, which latter fact excited the envy of other ladies. Lord Derby admired her very much. It was said that the Duchess a few years before had had his promise over a glass of champagne at dinner that when he came into power he would make her Mistress of the Robes to the Queen. It was a choice that did him harm and aroused distrust, because it gave rise to the assertion that he had been induced to make it by a handsome woman.

"Lord Palmerston's Cabinet was set aside, and a longer time was to elapse than people at the time thought, before he would again take up the reins of government. He bore his fall at first with great confidence, and to all who wished

¹ "This is rather a questionable assertion."—Tr.

to know he declared that he would be at the helm in a short time. At an evening party at the Duchess of Cambridge's, as he was standing at a window looking at the eclipse of the moon, he characteristically said, 'There is an eclipse up there now, and here also,' pointing to himself; 'but it will not last long.'

"Herr von Manteuffel and Herr von Massow had begged my husband to thank the Queen and the Prince Consort for the snuff-boxes she had presented to them on the occasion of the Princess Royal's wedding. He took the opportunity to do so between the retirement of the old Cabinet and the entrance of the new one into office. The interview with Prince Albert was the more interesting as he was glad to hear how he regarded the situation. The Prince talked of the cause of the crises, and expressed his conviction that the new Cabinet might last some years. He expressed himself very sharply about the Emperor of the French, who, as he observed, had treated the French as well as the English brusquely, and had lost his calm. He had wished to stamp them as accessory to a crime which had been done by Italians. The Prince Consort changed the subject, and closed the conversation by going over to another. He spoke of the Princess Royal's reception in Berlin with great satisfaction, but he complained of the Queen (Elisabeth) not having met her with more cordiality. She could not reconcile herself to an English niece."

It would be too lengthy to enter into the details of the Prince's assertion and the reasons for it. They rested on utterly incorrect information and vague reports which were circulated, without investigation, by exalted personages. Among Count Bernstorff's papers there is a letter from Countess Amélie von Dönhoff which goes to prove that Queen Elisabeth had been attracted by the personal charm and sweetness of the Princess Royal from the first.

"The echo of the universal acclamation," writes Countess von Dönhoff, "which is poured forth about this amiable member of our Royal Family will have reached you. But the doings of our quiet Charlottenburg have not, perhaps, penetrated so far, and you will be glad for me to tell you how close Princess Victoria is already to the Queen's heart. You know her simple, sincere heart, and you will have expected that the childlike simplicity, the amiability, cleverness, and the warm-hearted confidence with which the Princess met her Majesty would win a place in it for herself. The Queen's first words after meeting her at the Bellevue Château were: 'One must love her!' and they have proved true at every meeting."

Bernstorff could certify that soon after the formation of Lord Derby's Cabinet, notwithstanding Lord Malmesbury's efforts, which he made directly he took office, the sympathy for France began to wane in England. For the first time in many years the London Press called attention to the threatening dangers from France. Bernstorff also noticed with satisfaction how English leading men recognized afresh the necessity of a rapprochement between the Middle European powers and their own country. Prussia gained in popularity, while murmurs arose against French leaders.

"Count Walewski was severely blamed in London," the Countess avers. "People abhorred him here." Lady Lyndhurst, for instance, declared very loudly, 'I only give the Emperor Louis Napoleon one year; he is surrounded by rascals, and his Minister for Foreign Affairs, that pompous, presumptuous adventurer, Walewski, would betray him for a five-franc piece. The star of the Orleans family is rising.'

"People suddenly remembered, a fact they seemed to have hitherto quite forgotten, that they had known the French Emperor and Monsieur de Persigny as political refugees living in England, and conspiring against the

Government of France. The Liberal Press reprinted the trial of Monsieur de Persigny before the Chamber of Peers. He there admitted that he had wished to kill a superior officer, and they condemned him for an attempt to murder. They called attention to the utterances of Monsieur de Persigny as a conspirator in 1840, as a Republican in 1848, and as French Ambassador in 1858. Lord Malmesbury, who knew the present Ambassador well when he sought asylum in England, told me that he said to him immediately after Orsini's attempt, 'Take care, it is a very critical affair. Don't allude to past matters; do not recall former days to people's remembrance; they might bring up that occurrence against you.' Monsieur de Persigny replied, 'They will never venture to do so to the French Ambassador!' In his excitable and irate mood, he had thought himself strong enough to be able to venture on anything in England."

Bernstorff learned that Persigny, filled with rage and fury, sided with the old Cabinet, and had attacked the new Government in violent language. He had prophesied the end to the alliance. But while the French Ambassador raged and stormed like a bull at a red rag, Lord Derby had come to an understanding with Walewski. The latter omitted to inform Persigny at the right moment that an understanding had been arrived at. He wished to irritate him and thus cause him to commit foolish actions, so that he might get rid of his hated rival. Lord Derby, thinking that Persigny was informed of everything, spoke to him about the understanding, whereupon Persigny flew into a rage and sent in his resignation, which was accepted.¹ People should not of

¹ Monsieur de Persigny got a friend to make the circumstances known to his wife, who wept and lamented, and made dreadful scenes in society, till people were touched at last and sympathized with them at having been sacrificed.

course forget that Persigny had constantly intrigued with Louis Napoleon against Walewski. The Duke of Malakoff was appointed to succeed Persigny. This created some sensation at first in London, but Lord Derby accepted the appointment. It was deemed by the public to be the last call in support of the alliance. The Duke's name recalled to people in both countries their united efforts in the great military struggle. It was considered as a compliment from Louis Napoleon, "without, however, people finding much flavour in it."

After Orsini's accomplices, Bernhard and Pierri, had been acquitted by an English jury, every one expected a sudden disruption of the Anglo-French alliance, but Louis Napoleon had had his wits sharpened by former experiences, and was wise enough to take no further notice. The alliance continued, but lost credit in public esteem. Russian diplomacy had the satisfaction of seeing in England the decrease of sympathy for France. They had an astute representative in London, Baron Brunnow having taken the place of the incapable Chreptowitsch. Count and Countess Bernstorff had little personal sympathy with him, for, notwithstanding his courteous manner, they thought him false. Bernstorff had a high opinion as to his skill in diplomacy, and informed his chief in Berlin, soon after Brunnow's arrival in London, that the relations between Russia and England had become closer. After Lord Palmerston's fall, Count Azeglio, the Sardinian Minister, came off the worst of the foreign Ministers. He was so little able to conceal his attachment to the late Cabinet that he compromised his position, and gained the ill-will of the new Prime Minister. Count Azeglio's antipathy towards the new Cabinet was owing to the fact that it maintained a more friendly attitude towards Austria than that of Lord Palmerston. Count Vitzthum, the

Saxon Minister, showed his pleasure at Lord Palmerston's fall more than all the other diplomatists, and Countess Bernstorff writes: "He is very intimate with the Tories, and Lady Palmerston told me that he paid her a visit of condolence after the resignation of the Government, wearing an artificial expression of sympathy. His departure for Lisbon saved him from being obliged to perform a political egg-dance.¹ Count Apponyi² had been the Austrian Ambassador since the recall of Count Colloredo in 1857, and according to Count Vitzthum, he was neither sufficiently intelligent nor sufficiently energetic. He rather allowed himself to be driven by circumstances, and took no leading part in public events.

"... So far as we were concerned, we found ourselves in friendly relations with numerous members of the late Ministry, as well as with the present Cabinet, and we always visited at the houses of both parties. We were invited by Lord Clarendon, Lord Malmesbury, and Lord Palmerston, one after the other, and we were at nearly all the dinners given in honour of the new Cabinet, so that I once jokingly remarked that the Tory party compromised us. They evinced great confidence in my husband, and turned to him at once for assistance in an affair which threatened from the first the existence of the Cabinet. It was in regard to Naples.

¹ He accompanied Prince George of Saxony to Portugal.

² Count and Countess Bernstorff had previously known the Austrian Ambassador. The Countess describes them at a ball at the Turkish Ambassador's, Musurus Pasha: "Count Apponyi wore a superb Hungarian costume adorned with turquoises. Countess Apponyi appeared in the national dress, which did not become her very well. The small velvet cap and the apron were out of place with the modern style of hair-dressing, and with the dress of other ladies. It did not set off her figure, which was slight and beautiful. She was short-sighted, and had a squint. She was considered distinguished looking, but cold and unattractive. He was thought amiable, but his political views were not held in high esteem."

"My husband attended to the Neapolitan affairs with the English Government for more than a year, from a special desire to oblige, although that ungrateful task gave him great trouble, and he would have gladly given up the affairs, not merely on account of political considerations, but for his own sake. The Tory Cabinet would have renewed diplomatic relations more easily and quickly, had it not been for a wretched occurrence, which the Opposition used as a means of greatly hampering the Government. In June of the previous year a Sardinian ship returning from Genoa, Cagliari, and Tunis, landed armed men at Ponza, on the Neapolitan coast, released some political prisoners, and took them on board. Soon after that the same ship landed some four hundred men on another part of the coast, who tried to foment a revolution among the inhabitants.

"The Sardinian vessel, the 'Cagliari,' had proceeded further and been seized by two Neapolitan frigates, which declared it to be their prize. They kept the captain and men prisoners, and brought an action against them at Salerno. The Sardinian Government alleged that the captain and men had been coerced by the insurgents and obliged to obey them. . . . Among the men were two Englishmen, mechanics, who were said to be victims of the insurgents. The Neapolitan Government asserted, however, that the captain, his men, and the mechanics had all compromised themselves. . . ."

The trial was long drawn out. There was a good deal of indignation in England at the delay, and the Press published violent articles against the Neapolitan Government. The Tories had originally been well disposed towards Naples, but when the Opposition were at one with public opinion, the Government began to lose courage. Lord Malmesbury begged Bernstorff to intervene. The

English prisoners must be released before diplomatic relations could be resumed. Meantime, there was another attack in Parliament, and the Opposition declared they could not be satisfied merely with the release of the prisoners;¹ the rights of Sardinia must be vindicated, for the seizure of the vessel was contrary to national rights. Lord Palmerston stated that the "Cagliari" had been captured on the high seas, and not in Neapolitan waters, an assertion which proved incorrect. Bernstorff, by excessive exertion, succeeded at last in getting the English mechanics released. He did not receive any public acknowledgment from the English Government, for the release was ascribed to Mr. Lyons, who had been sent to Naples, but without any official position. Lord Malmesbury even used the incident as a proof of how unpractical it had been to break off diplomatic relations. The Opposition, in conjunction with the Sardinian Minister, were not yet satisfied, and demanded that Naples should make amends to Sardinia for the loss of the vessel. It would, however, be going too much into detail to add anything further on the sub-

¹ "We shall lay the 'Cagliari' papers before Parliament, and probably refer the question to the Crown lawyers. . . . Bernstorff is trying to obtain the freedom of the engineers, and if you have a chance, pray observe to the Neapolitan Envoy at Paris that their liberty must be the first and indispensable step to a reconciliation with his Government." Lord Malmesbury to Lord Cowley, the English Ambassador at Paris. 14th March, 1858. "Memoirs of an Ex-Minister," by the Earl of Malmesbury. Vol. i., 425.—Tr. By permission of the publishers.

"Bernstorff arrived yesterday, and stated that he was instructed to say that the King of Naples would not re-open the negotiations, which Clarendon unfortunately refused, for the release of the prisoners; that he would have no interference with his affairs; and that all he would do would be to send a Minister to London and Paris, if we would reciprocate. I of course said that, this being the case, I preferred the *status quo*. Bernstorff added that the King was in reality delighted at there being nobody at Naples to bother him, as the French and English Ministers always did." Lord Malmesbury to Lord Cowley. October 22nd, 1858. "Memoirs of an Ex-Minister," by the Earl of Malmesbury.—Tr. By permission of the publishers.

ject. Bernstorff got weary of the whole affair, which had cost him so much time and labour. He conscientiously sent reports to Naples, but he did not wish to enter into the question any more.

The Prince of Prussia had the offer of the Legation at Vienna made to Bernstorff as a mark of his special confidence. The Prince desired to enter upon a prouder and more energetic course towards Austria. It was but natural that he should think of the man who had so bravely defended the rights of Prussia against Schwarzenberg in 1848 and 1850. Bernstorff was rather inclined to regard Manteuffel's proposal at first as an evidence of want of confidence in him. He replied by earnestly desiring to remain in London for the following reasons:—

Count Bernstorff to Baron Manteuffel.

“LONDON, 5th June, 1858.

“I hasten to reply to your Excellency's letter of yesterday, in which you are commanded by H.R.H. the Prince of Prussia to ask me if I would find it agreeable or disagreeable to be transferred to Vienna. I humbly beg to say that it would be extremely unpleasant to me. Since his Royal Highness has been so kind as to ask me, I venture to infer that he does not intend to remove me against my inclinations from a post where I believe I have given satisfaction, though under personal difficulties, to my Government. And I also make bold to express the hope that I have won for the Royal Service a desirable position by every possible effort. I need not enter into details now as to why I specially do not wish to go to Vienna. But I will say that I am weary of being cast here and there about the world, and that I desire nothing more than to remain quietly at my post, which is the one I absolutely prefer to all others. Even Paris, if

eventually vacant, which I should rather have than Vienna, would not be so agreeable as my present position in London. Finally, I beg your Excellency to accept my warmest thanks for the offer, and for the proof of his Royal Highness's gracious interest and confidence."

Bernstorff also wrote a long letter to the Prince of Prussia, in which he stated his strong reasons for wishing to remain in England.¹

"My position since then has gradually become more pleasant and satisfactory, and the work of a closer relation between the two Courts, in which I had the good fortune to take an active part, has crowned the whole. While I see with pleasure, that owing to my efforts, the relations between the two Courts grow daily better and more confidential, I am also happy to observe in the many proofs of personal sympathy and consideration which the Queen, whose perfect sincerity is beyond doubt, gives me and my family, that the prejudices which existed at the time of my appointment, and which were fomented from many sides, have been quite overcome, and that the conviction increases here that all my sympathies draw me to England, and to the Royal Family, whom I deeply revere. My personal opinion is that no one could work with more assurance for the close connection between the two Courts and countries than I can. I can, therefore, find no reason which could necessitate my removal, and can only beg your Royal Highness, who has always shown me so much favour and justice, to let me know if from any other side there should be reasons making it desirable for me to leave, in order that I may give your Royal Highness the fullest explanations. I would gladly do the same in regard to the conditions under which I accepted

¹ Bernstorff to the Prince of Prussia, London, July 3rd, 1858, the Prince being at Baden-Baden at that time.

the post here, and which I am sure would meet with your Royal Highness's approval, as well as that of the English Court.

"Should your Royal Highness wish to speak to me about these matters, and have any commands for me during your stay at Ostend, I beg to be permitted to leave London at the end of this month. My wife greatly needs a change after her confinement, and she would then be strong enough to accompany me. I also look forward to your Royal Highness's commands about going to Coblenz in time for the visit of the Queen of England, unless the visit should be of a private character. . . ."

The Queen of England visited Berlin in the summer, and was magnificently entertained. Her unaffected manner and bright conversation won all hearts. It was a family visit, and the Queen carefully avoided politics. Lord Malmesbury, who was in attendance on the Queen, discussed the political situation with Baron Manteuffel, referring in particular to the acute state of affairs in the East.¹ He also expressed his desire that Count Bernstorff should remain the Prussian minister in London.

"The Queen of England," writes Manteuffel on August 30th, to Bernstorff, "has been, so far as I have been able to ascertain, very reserved and cautious here. She has moved entirely in the family circle, and avoided conversation on politics. I have only seen her once at Babelsberg.

¹ There was a dispute just then about some separate questions which had not been settled at the Congress of Paris. The chief one was the surrender by Russia of Bessarabia to the Porte, whether it meant giving up old or new Bolgrad, and the Serpent Island at the mouth of the Danube, as well as the evacuation by Russia of Kars. They destroyed the fortresses of Ismalia and Reni without considering the question of compensation. Lastly a question of great difficulty was whether the Danube Principalities should be organised into one or two separate ones, with their own Constitutions. In August, 1858, the Conference of Paris settled this affair.

"Prince Albert has been more active. Stockmar has supported him, and he seems to have made Prince Friedrich Wilhelm the recipient of his political theories. He only spoke on indifferent topics to me, nor have I sought him.

"Lord Malmesbury has been with me frequently, and I have had two conversations on politics with him. The first began by his expressing his desire that your Excellency should remain in England as our Minister. I replied that I agreed with him, and that if rumours of change had been spread, they did not emanate from official quarters. I suggested to him to lay the subject of your remaining in London before the Prince of Prussia, and he told me that he had done so. Lord Malmesbury particularly protested at your being replaced by Herr von Usedom. I mention this in the strictest confidence. Two important subjects came up in further conversation; one, the peculiar uncertainty of ministerial positions, referring to his own as temporary; he also expressed, I do not say fear, but anxiety, concerning the views and plans of the Emperor of the French. I share this last, partly from my own careful observation, and partly because of Count Hatzfeldt's reports. It struck me all the more to meet with distrust in Lord Malmesbury, who is one of the Emperor's oldest acquaintances. He also regards with concern the state of affairs in Turkey, and connects it with Paris, and thinks that the Eastern question will cause another crisis. He went on to say that as neither England nor Prussia wished to make acquisitions in Turkey, we could hardly allow others to do so, our real interests leading us to support the Turkish Empire. He therefore suggested that we should take up the Turkish question together, and communicate our observations and conclusions to each other. I replied that Prussia, of course, made no claim to

any part of Turkey, and that I was prepared to accept his communications with gratitude and discretion, and should be open with him, without, however, wishing to undertake any definite duty, or settling a coalition about an indefinite future. He quite agreed to this reservation. He spoke to the Prince of Prussia in a similar strain.

"Lord Malmesbury also expressed his special desire to see us at one with Austria. I said that we also desired this, but that difficulties were constantly being raised by the other side. He did not discuss the subject further, although I made the attempt to pour out some pure wine. He repeated that England attached great importance to a good understanding between Prussia and Austria. He also agreed with me about it, but in the interests of peace he thought we ought to avoid the appearance of a coalition against Louis Napoleon, and he blamed the tendency of Austrian diplomacy in this direction. This was the principal subject of our conversation."

During the summer, which brought a lull in political affairs, Bernstorff wished to visit a health resort.

"We would have liked to take," writes the Countess, "a short trip to the continent, but my youngest child was a hindrance to this. I did not feel well and had the greatest longing for change of air, in order to recover after my confinement, and from the extreme heat of the season. But a trip to the continent was unfortunately impossible, and we stayed at Brighton, not a pleasant place. . . . Our youngest son was baptized on 21st July, and was named Albrecht, after his father, and Percy, by desire of the Duchess of Northumberland, his godmother. Lord Cranworth, Lady Eardley, and Baron Bentinck, the Dutch Minister, were the other sponsors.

"The whole ceremony fatigued me very much. We had

fixed this early date, because it was the nineteenth anniversary of our wedding, and because it was the anniversary of the baptism of our eldest son, fourteen years before."

After a short visit to Sir Culling and Lady Eardley, Count and Countess Bernstorff made visits to other country houses, where they saw a still more magnificent side of the country life of the aristocracy. They first went to Hatfield House, which is so rich in historical associations, and where Queen Elizabeth received the news of her sister, Queen Mary's death. The oak tree in the park under which she was sitting when Lord Burleigh announced to her that she had become Queen is still shown.

"We found Hatfield House magnificent in every respect. It stands on a little height, its four towers commanding the neighbourhood. The whole arrangement of it, with its old furniture, its rare and costly works of art, the great library and picture gallery, are uncommonly rich. Among the portraits, is one of Elizabeth, more remarkable and original than beautiful, which represents the Queen in the costume of Diana, as huntress, a costume which did not at all become her."

At Brighton, whither the Count and Countess went from Hatfield, their stay was spoiled by the serious illness of their youngest son. After his recovery they went to Knowsley, Lord Derby's place near Liverpool.

"The comfortable rooms they gave us made us forget our long journey and the dreary landscape through which we had travelled. When we entered the drawing-room it seemed as if we were suddenly in London, for there was the same elegance, the same faces, which we constantly saw in town. The Duchess of Manchester was also there. With all her beauty, she does not make an attractive impression on me. Lord Derby appeared her adorer here also, and had many small jokes with her, which some-

times went rather far, and which were not always agreeable to her, especially in my presence. He made fun of her pronunciation of English, and altogether, he joked her a good deal, acting the devoted meanwhile. Her husband played quite a subordinate part. A crowd of high-spirited young people surrounded her, forming quite a little Court.

"Knowsley has been built at different periods. It was greatly enlarged and beautified by the first Lord Derby, who placed the crown on the head of his son-in-law, the Duke of Richmond, who reigned as Henry VII. after Richard III. was killed at Bosworth Field. In the course of time the house met with other changes, so that the red brick building looks very irregular. The magnificent dining-room with its valuable family portraits is a superb sight, and among them is the first Lord Derby and his daughter, Margaret, Duchess of Richmond, and *mother of Henry VIII.*¹ The whole place can only be described as magnificent. We thought it the most beautiful one we had seen, everything is so rich and harmonious. There was nothing jarring and nothing to desire. The table and attendance can only be described as perfection. There were large numbers of horses and carriages, and the trip to Liverpool in one of the carriages drawn by four black horses, the coachman in old-fashioned livery, attracted the notice of the whole town.

"Lord Malmesbury, who was likewise one of the guests, gave us a vivid account of his stay in Berlin, and was pleased at the thought of accompanying the Queen there next spring. The Queen has intention of being present at the baptism of the Princess Royal's expected baby. He said that people expected great changes in Berlin owing to the King's serious illness. He told the Prince of Prussia that he hoped these changes would not extend to the

¹ Margaret Beaufort was the mother of Henry VII.—Tr.

Legation in London, and the Prince, in reply, spoke very kindly about my husband."

The Countess's reminiscences close with a few lines describing a visit to Lord and Lady Westmorland, which give a graphic and attractive picture of their life and labour in the diplomatic career, and among the aristocracy of England. It is deeply to be regretted that such a source is not available for an account of Bernstorff's latter years, especially during the time of his Ministry in 1864 and during the years 1866 and 1870, as his own papers are so limited. A continuation of these reminiscences would undoubtedly have been a valuable contribution to the history of a most interesting period.

CHAPTER XIV

POLITICAL CHANGES IN EUROPE FROM 1858-1861

Hohenzollern-Auerswald Ministry—Schleinitz—The Prince Regent and Bernstorff—The rapprochement of the Tory Cabinet and the Middle States—Louis Napoleon's New Year speech—Austria arming against Sardinia—England's sympathy for Austria—Prussian policy—Mobilisation in Prussia—Willisen's Mission—Bernstorff in Berlin—His letters on the situation—Solferino and Villafranca—Lord Palmerston's Cabinet and the Italian national movement—Rapprochement between England and France renewed—The meeting of the Princes in Berlin—Louis Napoleon's plans—Bernstorff, Minister for Foreign Affairs—His great sacrifice in accepting office—His post in London kept open for him—Definite appointment—Bernstorff's summons to Ostend—His home and foreign programme.

THE long-expected changes in the Prussian Government now took place. As already stated, the Prince of Prussia undertook the Regency in October, 1858, and after he had dismissed Manteuffel, a new Cabinet was called, the well-known Ministry, Hohenzollern-Auerswald, in which Bernstorff's old friend, Herr von Schleinitz, was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs. A private letter from the Prince Regent is a fitting introduction to the new situation. It was in reply to Bernstorff's letter of congratulation on his assumption of the Regency.

The Prince Regent to Count Bernstorff.

“BERLIN/ 18 XI./ '58.

“Accept my best thanks for your kind letter of the 16th, about my acceptance of the Regency. The country has shown itself great and honourable.

"Opinion, since then, has become so excited amongst us that I no longer recognize the prudence which existed a month ago. What I announced as my programme in separate conferences to my new Ministry, and which I stated in an address on the 8th, you will find in the enclosed. It will convince you that we must observe great prudence and firmness in the Landtag, which is going much further to the Left.

"Your letter this summer surprised me, as you seemed to look upon my question through Manteuffel, as to whether you would like to go to Vienna, as a sign of my not being satisfied with your conduct of affairs in London. There was not the slightest reason for this thought. On the contrary, the proposal was the proof of my great confidence in you, as I now consider the relations with Austria most important and difficult. I could not, however, make such a change without your concurrence, on account of your antecedents in Vienna. As you did not wish to exchange London for Vienna, I quite gave up the idea.

"Meantime, I send my kindest regards to your wife, and I remain,

"Always yours,

"WILLIAM, PRINCE OF PRUSSIA."

Count Bernstorff to the Prince Regent of Prussia.

"LONDON, November 27th, 1858.

"Your Royal Highness, Prince Regent of Prussia,

"I cannot forbear sending your Royal Highness my most grateful thanks for your very gracious letter of the 18th, and the highly interesting enclosure, as well as for your most gracious consideration of my desire to remain here. I am deeply grateful for the withdrawal of the project of sending me to Vienna, and for the proof

it gives me of your Royal Highness's confidence in me. The happy knowledge of your satisfaction in my work will make me all the more zealous in the performance of it. Should it ever be that either through ignorance, or involuntarily, my views of circumstances do not coincide with those of your Royal Highness, I earnestly and respectfully beg you to tell me so, to enable me to act in accordance with the latter.

"I have seen with genuine pleasure in your Royal Highness's letter, and in the enclosed address to the Cabinet, that you have decided to meet the Left with firmness, and that the Conservative and traditional foundations of the Kingdom will, by God's grace, be upheld in all circumstances. Although I had not the slightest doubt on this point, it is particularly pleasant to me to have the support of your Royal Highness's definite wishes to meet the many anxieties which are expressed on all sides here concerning the present agitation in Prussia. I confidently hope that your Royal Highness's wisdom and firmness, and the skill and reliability of your new advisers, will succeed in allaying this excitement, and in guiding affairs into safe paths."

Bernstorff had seen from the beginning, in contrast to the extreme Right, that the fact of the Prince of Prussia taking up the Regency was a happy event and a deliverance from untenable conditions. The closing lines of his congratulatory letter prove this:—

Count Bernstorff to the Prince Regent of Prussia.

[Private letter.]

"LONDON, *March 22nd*, 1859.

"Although I almost fear to become wearisome to your Royal Highness, now that you are absorbed by the labours

of your high calling, I cannot resist sending my fervent good wishes and congratulations. May they be realized, and may Prussia, under your Royal and knightly guidance, earn fresh fame, honour and success united in the brotherhood of arms with Germany, when the hour of danger and trial comes."

The Prince, who had been thus called to lead Prussia, in the new political situation, had placed most profound confidence in Bernstorff, because his views on home and foreign politics agreed with his own. He knew Bernstorff's conservatism, and he also knew that Bernstorff did not share certain opinions and tactics of the extreme Right, which were in opposition to his programme. He knew too, that Bernstorff, who had represented the interests of Prussia with such decision in Vienna, would never act weakly towards Austria, where the honour and power of Prussia were concerned, much as he wished the two great German Powers to be united.

In his despatch to the King on June 14th, 1858, in which a long conversation with Lord Malmesbury is reported, Bernstorff develops in detail, the policy to be entered on in regard to Austria. The English Secretary for Foreign Affairs, much concerned at the military preparations of France, had once again felt the desire to impress his views on the Prussian Envoy, as to the necessity of a firm union between Austria and Prussia against Louis Napoleon. Bernstorff rightly answered that it was Austria, who by petty jealousies and the refusal to recognize Prussia as a Great Power, had made it impossible to attain this object. If, therefore, Prussia were to assist Austria, she must receive guarantees from the latter that her help had not been given in vain. "If the Cabinet at Vienna," writes Bernstorff, "will not oppose the policy

and interests of Prussia, in the question, for example, of the Duchies, but will come with its whole strength to her moral and material support; then Austria can with more reason demand that Prussia shall, in return, be ready to assist her in all dangers, real or imaginary, that may threaten her on her eastern and southern frontiers, if they have no direct interest for Prussia. Germany can only be really strengthened and enabled to insist upon her rights in all quarters, if the two German Great Powers mutually fulfil their obligations and promise a firm and sincere alliance."

The outbreak of war between Austria and France in Italy, though long expected, was delayed for some months. A crisis came at last at the beginning of 1859. The long-desired *fait accompli* for the Emperor of the French was the Ultimatum from Vienna to Turin. Austrian statesmen entered undismayed upon the struggle, because they hoped that Prussia and the rest of Germany would be on their side. The Austrian Press was untiring in preaching, especially in south Germany, about the common struggle against the hereditary French enemy. There was considerable reserve in Berlin at the proffers of friendship. But the revolutionary movement in Italy, and the anxiety about the too great development of the strength of France, decided the Prince Regent to entertain thoughts of armed mediation. All the necessary preparations for mobilization were made, and General Willisen was sent to Vienna to treat with the Austrian Cabinet. The Prince Regent offered to guarantee the Austrian possessions in Italy, but, in case of war, he desired that Prussia should have the chief command of the united armies, only excepting an army which Austria might form out of her own and south German troops on the Upper Rhine.

In the midst of these strained relations the Prince Regent turned his eyes towards England. It would now be seen whether England would realize Lord Malmesbury's suggestions of a league against Austria.

"I have had a long conversation with Lord Bloomfield," writes Schleinitz to Bernstorff on January 9th, "at the desire of the Prince Regent, as we wish to avoid any danger that may arise if the subject were to be set down first in writing. One knows fairly well what the answer from England will be, and I agree that with the counter currents which exist in England in regard to this matter, the position of an English Minister as to the Italian complication, probably now approaching, is not light, and it is hardly possible for them to announce beforehand a plan of action. I am inclined to believe that the statesmanlike opinion which puts weight on the preservation of the balance of power will be victorious over the national sympathies entertained, it is true, by a large section of the English people. It might, however, then be too late, as you rightly observe, when John Bull awakes to a consciousness of his real interests and a full sense of his political obligations. It therefore, unfortunately, follows that we have to deal with a factor which stamps all combinations with uncertainty. I must also admit that Austria is not a satisfactory ally. United with France and Russia, all calculations would be easier, life would be much more pleasant, and brilliant results could be obtained in a short time. But could anyone who meant well by Germany, and especially by Prussia, advise, in all seriousness, such an alliance? I believe that even friend Bismarck would not have the courage, if he were in a responsible position."

In a later letter to Bernstorff, Schleinitz describes the situation as a "real rope dance position, in which one can only maintain one's own by gazing calmly at the object,

and neither glancing to the right nor to the left.”¹ His policy was that of a cautious statesman, who would not put forth the strength of Prussia without urgent reason.

“We may, of course, under certain circumstances, even have to make war against the east and west. But this necessity must not be created by the interests and convictions of others.² . . . A war of aggression against France might prove necessary for our self-preservation, but to enter upon such a war now would only make it popular in France, which is not the case, and at the same time turn the Russians against us, which seems to me rather a breakneck and hasty undertaking. This fact must be urgently impressed on the Austrians, as well as the fact of how much more profitable, from a military and political point of view, things will stand for Austria, if she is protected on the whole of her frontiers by Germany, Italy excepted, and thus be able to throw all her forces into Italy. *There is no doubt in my own mind that Prussia and Germany must not suffer Austria to be utterly overthrown in Italy to her disadvantage, or to the advantage of France, nor should they permit any change in the balance of power.* The intervention in this case is less of a political than a military nature.”

This attitude, on the whole, suited the claims of the case; if one did not, with Bismarck, wish to make use of the situation in Austria to the advantage of Prussia. Just as at the time of the Crimean War, he wished to

¹ Schleinitz to Bernstorff, private letter, dated January 9th, 1859. He had little hope of help from England. When Prussia turned to England in May, he wrote: “Among the things sent to you to-day is a German letter in which expression is given to the wish for an understanding with England. I have done this chiefly at the desire of a highly placed lady. I promise myself little success from it. In the present situation, the Cabinet, with the best will, cannot enter into such matters, and the intervention depends also upon the next military success.” The Princess of Prussia, the wife of the Regent, was the lady mentioned.

² Schleinitz to Bernstorff. Berlin, May 2nd, 1859. Private letter.

place a large army in the field, and compel Austria to pay for the alliance with Prussia with certain concessions in regard to the German question; and a way should also be left open for an understanding with France and Russia.

At this time, however, there were no leaders in Prussia to take practical, energetic measures. Willisen had, meanwhile, peculiar experiences at Vienna. It was at first declared there that the Prussian offers were too little, and it was desired that she should guarantee the maintenance of the old sphere of influence of Austria in Italy. Later on when unfavourable news arrived about the Austrian position in Italy, they became more amenable. The Prussian conditions were accepted, but a written agreement was requested, a demand which Schleinitz refused, after a Cabinet Council was held on June 14th. The mobilization of six Prussian army corps followed, as well as a proposal by Prussia at the Federal Diet for the formation of a South German observation corps of 60,000 men. In spite of the Austrian defeat at Magenta, she hesitated to take Prussia by the hand, and declared that Prussia was bound to defend all Austrian possessions. Austrian policy thus trifled away the help of the North German Power.

It is not precisely stated what position Bernstorff took in the Austro-Prussian negotiations, and there is nothing relating to it among his papers. In any case, he had longed for Prussia to take part in the war, as is seen in a few letters addressed to his wife at that time, but, of course, only if Austria made those concessions about the position of Prussia in north Germany which he had always advocated.

He was called from London to attend the Cabinet Council which met on June 11th, to deliberate on the last demands of Austria, and before he returned to England he

went to Baden to see the Prince Regent, who was there for a Council with the German Princes.

There was, even then, some talk of appointing him Minister for Foreign Affairs, as is seen in a letter to his wife :—

Count Bernstorff to his Wife.

“BERLIN, June 29th, 1859.

“. . . The instructions I am bringing to London were sent to St. Petersburg yesterday; they only concern the restoration of peace. War is most improbable for us, I think. . . . I was with the Prince Regent to-day; he told me he was sorry not to be able to see you for a moment, at least, but that he did not know how he could find time to do so, upon which I told him that you were not here. He said he would not be ‘signing till to-morrow, and that he would send me a letter for the Prince Consort.’ So it is possible that I may be invited to the military dinner to-morrow.

“People have talked a good deal to me about accepting a seat in the Cabinet, but I have declined everything, and advised Schleinitz remaining, eventually recommending Pourtalès, as we are now sailing in his waters. Pourtalès was with me yesterday evening, initiating me until one o’clock this morning. He is a sort of second edition of Radowitz. But Schleinitz and Gruner have repeatedly told me that if a change is made I am the only possible Minister. I have, however, declared that this would only be if there was a complete change. Under present circumstances I have advised against this, and I do not believe that there will be any question of it just now. The Prince dislikes changes, and where would people be found, especially now that we stick so deep in the mud? I abstain from all advice as to war, because I consider it

ruinous when there is no certainty that it can be carried on with vigour. It must come from above. Who knows? It may be better so. God's ways are inscrutable, and the fate of nations and of man are in His hand. . . . Schleinitz told me that the Prince of Prussia had wished him to be in London, as I always fancied, and to have Pourtalès in the Cabinet."

In England also there had been great changes in the Government. Lord Derby's Cabinet was with difficulty prolonged only because of the disunion amongst the Opposition. It was in the minority in March, 1859, on the division on his Reform Bill. He obtained a reprieve by the dissolution of Parliament, but the General Election went against him in the summer. Lord Palmerston returned at the head of the Government, after he had succeeded in winning over the most distinguished of the Whigs, Gladstone and Lord John Russell, who both entered the Cabinet. By an appeal to Milner Gibson he secured the support of the advanced Liberals. This new political constellation in England meant an entire change in the attitude towards the Italian question, as Palmerston and his supporters were on the side of the Italian national movement. Bernstorff summarized his views on the new state of affairs in a short despatch to his Government :—

*Observations suggested by the change of Government
in England.*

"BADEN, 18th June, 1859.

"The Palmerston-Russell Cabinet can only exist if it prevents an extension of the theatre of war and compels a speedy peace. The watchword of the new Government is that of public opinion and of Parliament.

"Since the rising in Milan under the expansion of

military spirit in Upper and Middle Italy, Austria must take account of the constitutional monarchical nationality principle. Any other basis would bring a worthless peace, and light the sparks of unrest and revolution at the first opportunity. This programme must be presupposed as necessary. It offers, indeed, conditions both of danger and advantage to Prussia.

"A. *The danger.* 1. Very dangerous and serious pressure on Prussia by England and Russia concerning the Gortschakoff despatch to the German states. 2. A Triple Alliance—England, Russia, and France—for the establishment of the basis of peace; or a Quadruple Alliance, in which Austria would make peace without Germany and Prussia, that is, to the exclusion of Prussia.

"The plan of 1853 for the exchange of Austrian Italy for the Principalities on the Danube is Palmerston's and Louis Napoleon's idea. One must not believe that Russia necessarily opposes this. Quite the contrary.

"B. *The advantages.* Let Prussia take the position of the English Ministry as described above, as a fact, and act in London in a proper and diplomatic manner. A very favourable understanding may be attained with England and Russia. It will also secure universal recognition and respect on the foundation of the present development of power in Germany."

The events in Italy went forward rapidly, and the dangers alluded to by Bernstorff were without an object. Only the prophecy as to Austria making peace with Louis Napoleon without Germany and Prussia was fulfilled. The Peace of Villafranca was known to have been made so quickly because they wished in Vienna a free hand with the hated Prussian rival. Austria was over-reached by Louis Napoleon.

In letters to his wife, who was at Homburg with the children, Bernstorff stated his views of the situation:—

“Read the ‘Times’ on the Emperor Francis Joseph and the Austrian army. It is heart-breaking. I must confess that everything turns round in me when I think of our conduct and its consequences.”

A few days later, on July 15th, he writes in French:—

“You wish to know my real opinion about the Peace. I have already told you that there is no better proof of our having been sitting between two stools than the orders of the day by both Emperors to their armies. The one says to his soldiers that he made an end of the war because it would have grown to greater dimensions than was in proportion to French interests, that is, because we would have entered in. The other says to his army, that he had concluded peace because his ‘Natural friends, upon whom he had counted, had not given the assistance which he had expected’; that again is, because we had betrayed him and left him in the lurch. That is the result of our cunning. . . . The one will have it that we had threatened him, if not in words, by deeds; the other condemns us, because we promised more or less to support him and afterwards did not give it.”

Much as Bernstorff had desired to take part in the war, he blamed the venomous critique which came from the Austrian Government and Press. “There is no truth,” he declared on July 30th, in a letter to the Countess, “in the assertion that the neutral powers, England, France, and Prussia, had agreed that hard conditions should be imposed on Austria. We have never left the basis of territorial adjustment, and we have, in no way, agreed with the two other powers. If I were at the helm of State, I would

earnestly demand explanations about this lie thrown in the face of Europe. These are melancholy incidents. We stand in a difficult and unfortunate position."

Bernstorff used all his influence against the slanders made by Austria against Prussia in London. Vitzthum writes about the Austrian accusations: "Count Bernstorff here in London repudiates with indignation the accusations made against Prussia, and asserts that Prussia had been ready to stand up for the territorial status."¹

It may be ascribed to Bernstorff's efforts that Lord John Russell consented to provide the proof that would free Prussia from the suspicion of having arranged with England more unfavourable terms for Austria than France had accepted.²

The Circular Despatch of July 21st protested against the insinuations which had been directed at Prussia's honour. The attacks continued for a long while.

The Press of Vienna contributed to all the newspapers in South Germany and inflamed the people's passions for the support of Austria. In North Germany there was great enthusiasm in favour of the Italian national movement, and Prussia's conduct during the war was approved.

Great as were the successes gained by Louis Napoleon, he had, notwithstanding, drawn upon himself, by the Peace of Villafranca, the hatred of the Italian patriots, who blamed the lukewarmness of the Emperor, and accused him of betraying the Italian cause. The annexation of Nice and Savoy but added to the bitterness of the Italians. Then when Garibaldi's expedition under English protection came upon the scene, the gulf between the Emperor of the French and the Italians widened. They imagined that

¹ Vitzthum's *Memoirs*, i., 342, "St. Petersburg and London."

² Lord John Russell did this in his despatch to Lord Bloomfield, July 7th, 1859.

the Emperor had only wished to have a pliant tool in the south, instead of a self-confident, strong neighbour. Then he began to turn his eyes again towards Prussia, recognizing, with the eye of a statesman, the Power of the future, and wishing to play it off against Austria. The meeting of the German Princes at Baden gave him to understand that the Prince Regent had resolved to help to protect Germany against an attack from France. But Louis Napoleon did not give up the game as lost, for he confidently relied upon the rivalry between Prussia and Austria, and his own skill in diplomacy.

The death of Friedrich Wilhelm IV. cleared the atmosphere in the midst of the confusion in Germany. His intellectual and very gifted mind was not adapted to the desperate struggle of political life, but he was succeeded by a practical politician in the best sense of the word. Wilhelm I. wished to begin his reign by a change of system, especially in respect to German affairs. He had regarded Bernstorff as his chief assistant, knowing that he was a thorough German, with high ideals far above all narrow prejudices. In 1861, when Bernstorff was still Minister in London, the King commissioned him to draw up the new Constitution for Germany, on the foundation of the Federal States, and excluding Austria.¹ As Schleinitz had long thought of resigning, it was a favourable opportunity to appoint Bernstorff Minister for Foreign Affairs. This weariness of office was accelerated by the fact that Schleinitz had not really satisfied any party. He had been considered by one party as "too Austrian," and by the other as "too Franco-Russian," and neither initiation nor energy were looked for from him. That his prudence and watch-

¹ Communicated at first in the papers of a former Consul-General, Schramm, for Prussia, and it appeared in numbers in 1873. Mentioned in the Memoirs of the Duke of Coburg.

fulness had saved Prussia from a war in defence of Austrian interests was soon forgotten. There was dissatisfaction against him at Vienna because his course towards Austria in her hour of need had not been favourable,¹ while Bernstorff won approbation for having, as was said, urged war in the crisis of 1859.

Schleinitz had recently alienated many friends by not acting with greater firmness towards England in the Macdonald affair.² He was thought by many, including Bernstorff, to have kept Prussia too much in the background in foreign affairs. The Prince Regent accepted his resignation, although he retained all his old regard for him.

It was thought in Berlin as early as June that Bernstorff might be induced to accept office as Minister for Foreign Affairs. Then Schleinitz wrote, saying that owing to his increasing ill-health he wished to resign, and added that the King desired to see Bernstorff as soon as possible. The latter had tried to avoid taking office, and had begged to be left in London until July 1st, 1861, so that nothing might be remarked. Thus the matter rested, but on June 22nd he was informed by Schleinitz of the probable dissolution of the Cabinet, and of the possibility of a Conservative Government being formed, when he would be called upon.

It was a serious struggle to Bernstorff to accept office. He was not alarmed at the magnitude of the task, for political life suited him, but the fact of his failing health after years of strenuous work weighed upon him; at the

¹ An article in the "Neuen Freien Presse" of Vienna, July 31st.

² Captain Macdonald, an Englishman, had been in a fray with some German travellers and railway officials about a place in a railway carriage. He was arrested on account of his violent behaviour, and fined. This excited great indignation in England. Lord Palmerston spoke insultingly about it in the House of Commons. Bernstorff had to mediate in the affair. Schleinitz replied with dignity.

very time when he urgently required rest the highest demands were made on him. But he could not refuse obedience to the King's commands.

Bismarck had suspected for years that Bernstorff had only accepted office in order to postpone his own entrance into the Cabinet, if not to prevent it altogether. In point of fact such plans were far from being the case. During the conflict with Parliament about the re-organization of the army, he held different views from Bismarck, as he proved by his resignation, for he thought it impossible to maintain a successful foreign policy in opposition to the Landtag. But if the struggle was to be fought out, he was of the opinion that no one but Bismarck could do it; and for this reason he did all that was in his power later on to induce the King to appoint him Prime Minister. He could, therefore, take the credit of having obtained Bismarck's nomination. It was no easy matter, as the King, in consideration of the popular antipathy to Bismarck, had great difficulty in making up his mind to do so.¹

In the summer of 1861 Bernstorff was the only man of whom the King had serious thoughts as Minister for Foreign Affairs. He was not "glued" to his post, as people say, and he repeatedly, while holding office, desired to be allowed to resign and to be replaced by Bismarck. But the King insisted on retaining him, and emphatically declared that a faithful subject could not forsake his master in the hour of need. Thus he remained as long as his conscience permitted it. At the crisis in September, when his convictions no longer allowed him to retain office, he did not hesitate to place his portfolio in the King's hands.

¹ Whilst Bernstorff was in the Ministry, he corresponded in a friendly way with Bismarck, and acceded to his desire that the Legation in Paris should be given to him. See Bismarck's "Thoughts and Recollections," i., 251.

Count and Countess Bernstorff left London on July 2nd with heavy hearts. The Countess went to stay with relations for a time, and Bernstorff arrived in Berlin alone. One can understand his request of the King that his post in London might be kept open for him for a time.¹

Bismarck mentions this in his "Recollections," saying ironically that it was unprecedented for a man to have a seat in the Cabinet, and yet retain his former office. This is incorrect. The circumstances under which Bernstorff made his decision did in no way merit this criticism. His dislike to taking office has been stated; it was strengthened by the uncertain political outlook, and by the probability of having to retire shortly. He, therefore, made his request. Bismarck did the same thing on entering the Ministry afterwards, and his post in Paris was retained for him until he felt himself firmly seated in the saddle.

Count Bernstorff to his Wife.

"BERLIN, July 8th, 1861.

"The King dined alone with Schleinitz and me. They will not listen to my objections, saying that the King is just as Conservative as I am, and wishes to have Conservatives, so that he need not go further with Liberal measures; I was the only possible man, and was desired by the King and all the Ministers. Pourtalès, Usedom, Bismarck, and Goltz no one wished because they do not inspire confidence.

"Schleinitz also thinks I may reserve either London or Paris; the first may be left open. I still maintain my objections, and shall lay them again before the King and Hohenzollern when we meet to-day, and shall beg a definite decision, although they much wish to settle all before

¹ This request is found in a State paper, p. 420.

the King's departure. I shall do what is possible, and then leave the matter in God's hands. It is scarcely compatible with my duty to refuse unconditionally."

"Evening.

"I had a long struggle with Hohenzollern and Schleinitz to-day, and have begged the former to lay the enclosed statement of my opinions and wishes before His Majesty before we see him again, but it has been of no avail in releasing me. The King has not been persuaded, and has sanctioned everything. . . . I have done all I could, and enter, at least, with honour and flying colours, declaring that it was the greatest sacrifice I could make. The King and his Ministers will have no one else, because I alone have not the various failings which make the others impossible, and also because, according to them, I have the necessary qualifications. I have protested, but they say I must let them judge. It is a comfort for me that the reasonable Conservatives desire my entrance into the Cabinet. . . . Bismarck comes to-morrow, too late, unfortunately."

Although Bernstorff went to Berlin, he had laid down his programme, and he felt it necessary before taking up office to place his reflections once more before the King.

Count Bernstorff to King Wilhelm.

"BERLIN, July 8th, 1861.

"My objections concerning my ultimate entrance into the Ministry are as follows :—

"1. I have always been a Conservative, and cannot deny my convictions. But the state of affairs is such as to require certain Liberal measures to be carried through, and it appears to me right that this should be done by men

who have been more or less known for their liberal principles, rather than by Conservatives.

"2. My health is such that I do not really know whether I am able to bear the burden of such an office, and now I require a cure at Karlsbad, and a few weeks of complete rest afterwards. Later on I should require various indulgences which would, perhaps, be disadvantageous and inconvenient for your august service.

"3. I am a Lauenburg vassal, and the question is whether, in case of a conflict with Denmark, certain complications might arise, especially in the position of Prussian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

"4. If your Majesty does not think these considerations amount to disqualifications in your choice of me for the high office, I will, at least, beg to be allowed not to accept definitely before I have learned what the Ministerial programme is, and can then judge whether it is possible for me to accept it, holding my principles.

"5. In any case, I would respectfully beg to be permitted to undertake the Foreign Office provisionally, so that I might see if the political situation and my health make it possible for me to keep it definitely. I would, therefore, beg that my post in London be kept open for a time, and at the same time, in case of my resignation, your Majesty would accord me the post in London or in Paris, as I could then take no other diplomatic post. . . ."

He remained unshaken in his opinion, and after several days of opposition, Bernstorff accepted the Foreign Office, and took up his work on October 1st. Till that time he desired to recruit his health by a visit to Karlsbad. He learned that he might do so from a Royal Order of July 16th, and by a second slightly modified one, of July 31st, his appointment then took place.

The Royal Order, July 31st, 1861.

"BADEN-BADEN, July 31st, 1861.

"In reference to my order of to-day concerning your appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs, I hereby inform you that in accordance with your request, I will keep the Legation in London provisionally open for a few months. At the same time I hereby assure you that in case you retire from the Ministry, you shall continue in receipt of your salary should the appointment in London or Paris have already been filled.

"WILHELM.

"To the Minister Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Privil Councillor, Count von Bernstorff, now at Karlsbad."

Immediately after the public announcement of Bernstorff's appointment, various newspapers stated that it meant a fresh rapprochement between Prussia and England, and the "Indépendance Belge," in particular, wrote in this strain, and even mentioned a firm alliance between the two countries. In reality, it was far from Bernstorff's intention to bring about any dependence of Prussia upon England. He solely desired to free England from the arms of France, and to draw her closer to the two German Powers, especially to Prussia. Personally, notwithstanding the differences between the two countries, which were fomented by the Press, he was held in respect in London. His character was greatly esteemed, and the Queen and Prince Consort thought highly of him. The latter wrote to him on his appointment, expressing his sympathy for him in a very kind manner, some little time after these events:—

The Prince Consort to Count Bernstorff.

"BALMORAL, 15th September, 1861.

"My dear Count,

"I received your letter from Ostend, and while the Queen unites with me in best wishes on your appointment to the honourable office, we regret, at the same time, that it must take you away from London. . . . You have no illusions, I see, as to the difficulties of your new task, in which, of course, I concur; still, I am convinced that until Prussia takes up her right position towards Germany, it is nearly impossible for her to carry on an independent policy in Europe, and this first condition seems still far distant. In the meantime, Prussia must remain at the head of the German Liberal struggles, and thereby attain the leadership which she cannot obtain diplomatically, still less by sensitiveness and grumblings. 'The foremost leads the flock,' says Goethe.

"I remain always,

"Your faithful

"ALBERT."

Count Bernstorff to Count von der Goltz.

"KARLSBAD, August 9th, 1861.

"Although the baths do not permit of much writing, I will not neglect to thank you heartily for your kind letter of July 19th, and in a few lines tell you that I am making an enormous sacrifice, but could no longer refuse to do it after the matter had been placed before me. It requires courage not to feel alarmed by the internal state of affairs; nevertheless, it is the lot of man to bestir himself to fight. It has never been mine to rest with my hands in my lap, and therefore, since the King calls me

to the most difficult post, I must struggle on with God's help to the extent of my moral and physical power.

"I know that I may count upon your hearty and sincere co-operation in all circumstances, and I hope we shall agree in our views."¹

Bernstorff went to Ostend about the middle of August to consult with the King and his confidential advisers as to the share to be taken in the reform of the German Confederation. He had been called thither by the King's command. The Grand Duke of Baden appeared there, and his new Minister, Freiherr von Roggenbach, who laid a sketch of the suggested reform before the King, in which the closer alliance of the forty years was referred to. For example, every state should be at liberty to determine whether it would enter this union or not. Roggenbach declared himself ready to introduce this proposal either as a Circular Letter to the Courts, or as a motion in the Federal Diet, if he could be assured of the assent of Prussia.² Schleinitz had great hesitation, and above all, insisted that Prussia could not take the initiative. He could not conceive how such a dual government could work well—Imperial Ministers responsible to the Reichstag, and Prussian Ministers responsible to the Landtag; there would be continual conflicts, Prussia could not consent to follow the lead of a German Parliament without very safe guarantees for her independence. Before anything could be said about this plan, it must be thoroughly discussed. Bernstorff agreed with him in many details, but he was more favourable to the fundamental ideas

¹ Writing to the King from Erdmansdorf on August 20th, 1861, he says: "I cannot forbear repeating that it is a great personal sacrifice which I am about to make for your Majesty."

² Sybel as cited above, ii., 394.

than the other Ministers. The King was more conciliatory, and at last it was agreed that Roggenbach should lay a more elaborate plan of his system before them.

Before the King went to Compiègne to return Louis Napoleon's visit, Bernstorff summed up his views on home and foreign policy in the following note for the King.

"My views on German policy on entering the Ministry, and my programme for the King.

FOREIGN POLICY.

"1. German question: Absolute integrity of the German Confederation. No meddling of Foreign Powers in the revision of the Federal Constitution.

"2. Danish question. Not to consent to the incorporation of 'Schleswig with Denmark, even if Holstein and Lauenburg are entirely separate, and in any case, to persist in the separation of the German portion of Schleswig.

"Scandinavian union only possible and permissible if the whole Duchy, at least, remains with Germany.

"Not to suffer the levying of taxes in future in Holstein and Lauenburg without the consent of the Diet, and therefore if Denmark attempts it, an execution.

"3. Italian question: Not to recognize Italy until the Neapolitan and Roman questions are settled. After that to demand a guarantee against injury to German interests, and that Venice is not to be given up, as that lays bare Germany and endangers her strategic frontier.

"4. Eastern question: If other powers expand there, corresponding compensation for Prussia.

HOME POLICY.

- "1. Leadership of the German army by Prussia.
- "2. Joint diplomatic representation abroad.
- "3. Contribution to the Prussian navy by the various states.
- "4. Eventually joint Parliament in Berlin, consisting of a committee from the Prussian Landtag, and the representative chambers of the other German states, only, however, after the Prussian Imperial executive is already settled. The other Princes could in one way or another take part in the executive, if assurance were given that Prussia remained at the head.
- "5. The assembling of such a German Parliament might first take place to settle a definite Imperial Constitution, but never without Prussia at the head of the executive, and not as a sovereign constitutional assembly.
- "6. The future German Parliament to be called the Imperial Diet, and to be divided into a Princes' and a People's House.
- "7. *Alliance* with Austria and a guarantee for all her possessions."

Bernstorff had hesitated about the wording of the programme, whether Austria could be drawn into the Constitution. "If Austria," he writes, "takes part in it then the executive power is in the hands of Prussia and Austria with perfectly equal rights, otherwise in the hands of Prussia only."

But he struck out this whole sentence, and wrote it so that the new German Confederated States should form an alliance with Austria reciprocally guaranteeing all possessions.

A still more explicit memorial on the new policy pro-

posed by leading men is found among Bernstorff's papers, and gives in great measure his views. What it says in regard to Austria, about the English alliance, and about an understanding in reference to certain matters, about the Duchies, for example, agrees entirely with Bernstorff's views and his actions as Minister.

Memorial.

"October, 1861.

"The entrance of Count Bernstorff into the Ministry marks an important event for Prussian policy. It is proper for us to consider with what factors we have to reckon.

"We should err if we identified the King with the Liberal party, because he called some members of it to advise him on beginning his regency. The necessity of *deviating from the policy of the "Kreuz Zeitung" party* was the one thing clear to him. The present Ministers are men to whom he has given his confidence in past years; he has chosen them for themselves, not for their opinions. He went, so to speak, beyond his intentions in appointing them his Ministers. The only means by which they could govern with him *was to carry on a successful foreign policy*, and events have favoured this. The Regent keenly felt that Prussia did not stand as she ought towards the rest of the world.

In his straightforward way he recognized the necessity of opposing the threatening military supremacy of France, so that the terrible experience of Austerlitz and Jena should not be repeated. If he had been supported vigorously, the right line of active policy would have easily been found. But if these tasks surpassed the strength of Prussia, they ought, at least, not to have sat still during the Italian war, but to have seized the opportunity of fighting out the Schleswig-Holstein question while other

countries were occupied. The Ministers and their diplomatic friends, however, exerted themselves only to obtain the negative result of keeping the King neutral against his wish. They entangled Prussia in a policy of intervention, which prevented free action, and after the peace of Villafranca Prussia was isolated.

“We have read many notes and explanations, much about negotiations, conferences, and visits of princely visitors, but we have not seen Prussia’s will enforced in one single practical act. Herr von Schleinitz looked passively on at the development of Italian affairs, and only exhibited a feeble disapproval to the perilous precedents of Nice and Savoy, recognizing this act a few months afterwards at Warsaw without the least counter concession; he has accomplished nothing in Schleswig-Holstein, or Hesse, and in the Federal Military Constitution. It is the policy of the free hand which led Prussia to Olmütz and left her representatives humbly waiting in the ante-chamber at the Congress of Paris. The successor of Herr von Manteuffel has continued this policy of inactivity and waiting, of compromise and contradiction, and has come to grief on every question. As they obtained no success in foreign policy for the King, it was but natural that the Ministers, going further in home policy than their Sovereign, should soon be at variance with him. The Opposition towards the reform of the army, on which he had set his heart, embittered him so much *that he lost interest in altogether larger questions, and did not perceive dangers coming from without, but only forced a revolution at home. The real reason of the opposition of the deputies lay in foreign policy. They said that the Landwehr was sufficient for defence; a great active policy was not being made which would require a large army; shall we take such large sums of money and countless busy hands from the country, merely to have a few*

thousand more on parade? *Those members whose opposition was not a party question openly confessed that if the Government took up foreign policy courageously, everything would be conceded to the army.*

"Whatever one may think about the course that should be taken, there can be no doubt that a policy could not possibly be right which permits a country during stirring events to remain inactive, a country which claims to be a great Power, and which, according to its Sovereign's admonition, is not to live in the enjoyment of well-earned possessions, but to go on working.

"The words of Emanuel Philibert must be remembered by such a Power: 'Surtout, voyez que rien ne se fasse en Europe sans que vous y soyez!' And it is certainly high time that there should be energetic improvement in foreign policy, which may raise Prussia in public esteem. The opportunity for this is given by Bernstorff's taking the Foreign Office.

"It is natural that in an epoch such as ours, when the permanent is in course of dissolution, a country which cannot stand alone must seek alliances. Prussia must consider matters from two points of view: First, whether her interests and those of the Power with which she would ally herself agree in so far as to make an alliance natural and possible; secondly, whether the foreign Government is strong enough to give us sufficient support. Let us see how we stand towards the different Powers. First there is Austria:

"It was Prussia's preparations for war which arrested the progress of French arms in Upper Italy in 1859. The peace brought us into the most dangerous and ungrateful situation, and the Cabinet of Vienna rewarded our sacrifices with frivolous accusations, which have not been withdrawn to this day. Even after the Regent declined,

when he was at Baden, all the proposals made by France, and approached Austria in the most friendly spirit, the Austrian Cabinet obstinately continued to oppose all the efforts of Prussia. She refused a reform in the Federal Military Constitution, and supported the proposals of the Middle States and in Hesse in the civil question. In short, she has remained the same towards Prussia, notwithstanding all the other changes in her policy. While Austria calmly put up with unheard-of insults from Hungary, Slavonia, and Croatia, she did not concede a single thing to Prussia. To hinder all progress of her hated rival in Germany, Schwarzenberg, Buol, Rechberg, and Schmerling are of one mind. This cannot be a matter of surprise, for it is only the natural result of the position of the two Powers; either the one submits to the other, or their interests clash. Dualism breeds enmity.

“If Austria has no inclination for a sincere alliance with Prussia, it can also offer no firm support. She struggles in constitutional confusion, which leaves the only alternative, the falling asunder of the empire, or the return to absolutism. Either course could only take place by violent measures which must infallibly end in the bankruptcy of the country by events which would absorb the strength of the Crown lands even if the unavoidable war with Italy about Venice could be delayed. We must, therefore, strike Austria from the list of our alliances, and in the few unforeseen instances where we stand by her, we must keep complete freedom of action.

“The other German Governments are quite as hostile as Austria, with a few exceptions; Baden, Oldenburg, Gotha, Brunswick, Bremen, and Lübeck are all against Prussia, and, even if they were obliged to join her in repelling an attack from France, they would always try to thwart her aims in all else.

"For the same reasons an alliance with Russia cannot be counted upon any more than one with Austria, and, though the interests of that empire are not so directly opposed to those of Prussia, they have but few tasks in common just now, except, perhaps, the Poles, while the Cabinet at St. Petersburg will always endeavour to prevent a favourable solution of the Danish question for Prussia and Germany. And as Russia is, like Austria, absorbed by a crisis at home, it has not the power to assist Prussia; its compliance towards the Poles and Finns is an indication of the weakness of the Government.

"The English alliance is a favourite plan of the Liberal party in Prussia, and is, in fact, indicated by circumstances; the most important interests of both countries are the same; England requires a strong alliance on the continent, and the English navy can be of the greatest service to Prussia. But in practice, the English Government leaves nothing untried to render her alliance obnoxious to Prussia. The haughty levity of Palmerston seems to take pleasure in irritating and injuring Prussia at every turn, in great matters as well as small ones. In 1859, when Prussia, in spite of England's passive attitude, prepared to oppose France, Lord John Russell not only exerted himself, in conjunction with Russia, to put every obstacle in the way of the Berlin Cabinet, but declared that the English navy would oppose the operations of the French in the North Sea and in the Baltic as little as in the Adriatic. When Prussia privately asked England to protest against the annexation of Savoy and Nice, Lord Palmerston betrayed it to Persigny. In the autumn of 1860 Lord Bloomfield requested our Government to advocate the sale of Venice at Vienna. In every phase of the German-Danish conflict the English Government sided with Denmark, and it seems now to desire to crown its work by the marriage of the Prince of Wales

with the daughter of the heir apparent of the throne of Denmark. The Macdonald affair and the insults of the Press which have gone on till recently are the result of this feeling.

“While England has so constantly obstructed the interests of her natural ally, she has nearly always given way to her most dangerous rival's desires. She had half unwittingly been drawn into the war with Russia, and still more reluctantly she went to the Peace Congress at Paris; this same England, who, in February, 1859, loudly proclaimed the sacredness of treaties, tried a few months later to outvie France in the liberation of Italy, encouraged the Cabinet of Turin to go beyond the peace of Villafranca, and supported Garibaldi in his attack on Sicily, but at the same time never ventured to give active expression to this policy of liberation. She also did not oppose France in other undertakings which were indirectly against her views. She only opposed the Suez Canal by intrigue, and permitted the expedition to Syria; and allowed France to settle herself firmly in Cochin China and Madagascar. Her fleet was increased and enormous defences built which require the whole land forces for garrisons. But in this *parare bellum* is it not rather of the *pacem velle* than the decision to make use of these weapons? After all we have seen, can we still believe that England would prevent the annexation of Sardinia by the sword? Or, if an attack were made on the Rhine, would her statesmen do more than write angry despatches? Do not all signs indicate that peace at any price which does not directly injure English possessions is the solution, and is such a Power a reliable support in an active policy? We must deny this. Strongly as we should appreciate an Anglo-Prussian alliance, and firmly as we are convinced that it will yet come to pass, we feel that it will be of no

use until England learns what its value would be, and treats Prussia as an equal.

"Then there is France. But can we conclude an alliance with France, whose military supremacy threatens Germany before any other country, and who has constantly been the ally of our enemies; whose ruler promised to revenge the defeat of Waterloo? What objects could we have in common? These considerations are not to be set aside, and it is not our intention to advocate a French alliance, but only an understanding with France for definite political objects when it is necessary for us. There can be no doubt that the solution of the Schleswig-Holstein question in the German sense is such an object. Denmark has only made use of the stipulations of 1852 to withdraw from her obligations, to wreck both Duchies financially, and to suppress German nationality in Schleswig so that the incorporation might, by degrees, actually take place. It has gone so far in scorning German rights as only could have been permitted by the weakness of Prussia, the passive state of Austria, the impersonality of the Confederation, and the support of other Powers. Since the reopening of the negotiations of 1856, it came very near to an execution, then an apparent concession was made; the strong measures were given up, and the game began again, until a sort of culmination in the proceedings at this year's meeting of the Holstein nobles was reached. In gratitude for the consent of Prussia to the provisional arrangement, Orla Lehmann, the fanatic partisan of the Eider State, has been made Minister of the Interior.

"The Schleswig-Holstein question remains for Prussia always the '*hic Rhodus, hic salta*,' of a strong German policy. Prussia is bound by her antecedents of 1848-1850 to restore their hereditary rights to the Duchies. Speeches

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from the Prussian throne have promised them protection repeatedly, and Prussia must, therefore, offer the solution of this question as a pledge to the German nation, if it is to win the necessary confidence in her guidance. A real solution is not to be expected as long as the Duchies are under Danish rule. Where national contrasts are intensified, as here, by war and subjugation, no help can be given by the guarantee of other states; here a severance is imperative. It is the first task of Prussian policy to give the Duchies back to Germany, and it must be undertaken with the definite view of claiming the country, wresting it from Denmark. The difficulty that Holstein has the right to join with Schleswig, though the latter does not belong to the German Confederation, can only be removed by making the language define the limits; the southern part unites with Holstein, and the northern, which if not pure Danish, is not pure German either, is left to be incorporated with Denmark. This solution was proposed by Lord Palmerston in 1848. But if, as we think, Prussia cannot avoid taking up the question, she must manage it rightly. This is, no doubt, more difficult now than in 1848, where, in the general overthrow, no Power thought of intervention, especially as France was weakened by the February Revolution. We cannot close our eyes to the fact *that among the Great Powers France is now the leading one, and that it would be difficult to bring about a change in European territory in opposition to Louis Napoleon.* We must come to an understanding with him for this purpose. We are not blind to the danger, against which many warn us, but we consider it exaggerated. By an understanding we do not, of course, mean a written agreement, such as that at Plombières; *we desire no assistance from France, only neutrality.*

"People say the Imperial French Government will not

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concede this, for Denmark is her natural confederate. This assertion requires modification. It cannot be disputed that Denmark was often united with France against Germany, but only when France sought war with us. It is comprehensible that then it sought help from other Powers. In this opposition lies the joint interest; why France should wish Schleswig-Holstein to be Danish is not clear. It might only be dangerous for Prussia to move in that direction if France used it as an excuse to attack the Rhine. We do not think this likely now; the internal conditions of the Empire are not favourable for such a war, and it must be evident to Louis Napoleon, who watches Germany keenly, that with the increased growth of national feeling here, it might be serious for him were he to make such an attack. Even if he succeeded at first, it would create a war, the result of which might be dangerous to his dynasty. This is just his vulnerable point. If it should be clearly stated to the Emperor that the rectification of a part of the frontier in favour of France and to the disadvantage of Germany cannot ever be conceded; that, on the other hand, Prussia would be quite willing not to stand in the way of the interests of France where they do not conflict with her own, as, for instance, to leave her a free hand in the Mediterranean, and to side with her in Oriental affairs, etc., might not Louis Napoleon be induced to leave us a free hand with Denmark? We cannot doubt that on this basis an understanding might be arrived at. It is asked, will not England openly oppose Prussia? We reply, most certainly not. When Prussia acts in this matter, and England sees that rude notes and representations accomplish nothing, and that France is not unfavourable to us, she will inevitably acquiesce, and allow the conflict to run its course. It is English policy to oppose

every change in European systems by diplomatic Notes, and afterwards recognize the *fait accompli*, if it does not interfere directly with her own interests. The King's present visit to Compiègne shows how advantageously a rapprochement between Prussia and France would act on public opinion in England. The 'Times,' which poured gall upon us lately, suddenly bethinks itself of the Teutonic relationship and of the natural alliance of the two countries.

"Russia will certainly endeavour diplomatically to hinder the action of Prussia against Denmark, but she is not in the position to give expression to her views, or to begin hostilities. Austria does not come into consideration. It cannot be denied but that Sweden is much concerned, and is favourable towards Denmark. It would hardly remain neutral unless it were placed before the King, Prince Oscar, and Baron Wanderström that their ambitious plans, which do not affect Prussia, would meet with no opposition from Berlin. If the Scandinavian principle is to become practicable, Denmark must be united as a third Power, as in the case of Norway and Sweden, under one Crown. The possibility of such a project would be vehemently opposed by Russia and England, and the agreement of Prussia to it would be valued not a little at Stockholm.

"We must act with caution in preparing them at Paris and Stockholm for the conflict, and the diplomatic action against Denmark would then follow. Prussia must not bind herself further to the deliberations of the Confederation, but go her way independently, demanding the complete fulfilment of the stipulations of 1852 according to the German interpretation; Denmark will not agree to this, and then the breach follows. A war for the just cause of Schleswig-Holstein, which Prussia avoided in 1850, will blot out her

former humiliation. It will be an outlet for the dark, surging elements which always rise at times of excitement where no active policy exists. It will raise the self-esteem of the Prussian army, and, above all, will give Prussia a right to the leadership of Germany, while her opponents will no longer be able to say that their *propter agenda* trust in her is not *propter acta*. By this means the opposition of the German Governments against all that emanates from Berlin will be broken at last. It is an opposition which only finds support through the lack of energy in Prussia.

“Prussia's task is not to make annexations, but rather to stand up for the rights of Germany wherever they are attacked, and to show that it is the only country from which a new Constitution can emanate. If Count Bernstorff undertakes such a policy, one which well befits the descendant of Andreas Petrus Bernstorff, his name will live with honour in the history of Prussia and of Germany.”

Bernstorff took part, as Minister, at the coronation of the King at Königsberg in the autumn. He writes on October 18th, 1861 :—

“The Coronation is happily over. It rained in the morning, but we then had the best weather imaginable. The church was really beautiful and solemn. The great court of the castle, which was filled with such a crowd that a needle could not have fallen to the ground, was a splendid sight, and the King looked as handsome as one can fancy a King in Coronation robes can look. There were some touching scenes, especially when he knelt, after placing the crown upon his head, and again when the two Sovereigns knelt on the steps of the altar after the Coronation of the Queen, and we all fell on our knees to pray. There were also effective moments in the court, but, per-

sonally, I had the feeling that the enthusiasm might have been greater. The cause must be sought in the political differences. Still, the general opinion is that it all went off splendidly, as Lord Clarendon said to me."

Bernstorff guessed rightly. Soon after the festivities, political hatred arose among the different parties, and Prussia was thrown into a period of conflict which brought about many dangers at home and abroad.

CHAPTER XV

THE REFORM OF THE DIET—THE QUESTION OF ELECTORAL HESSE—THE COMMERCIAL POLICY

Bernstorff and the position of Prussia towards Louis Napoleon—King Wilhelm on the interview at Compiègne—The French Press and Bernstorff—The plans for reforming the German Confederation—Count Beust's project of a German Constitution—Rechberg and Biegeleben—The Prussian Despatch of December, 1861—Its unauthorised publication—The outburst of indignation in Austria and the small states—Bernstorff's attitude towards Austria and the small states—The Circular Decree to the Prussian Ministry on February 21st, 1861—The answer to the signatories of the "Identical Note"—Napoleon III.—Electorate of Hesse and King William—The Crown Prince's letter—Mobilization—Hesse gives way—The negotiations for the Commercial Treaty—The opposition of Austria and the small states—The Franco-Prussian Commercial Treaty—The agreements with China and Japan.

BERNSTORFF'S chief preoccupation in foreign policy was the Napoleonic plans, which in his opinion must inevitably lead to war with Germany. Still, though carefully weighing the prospects of such a struggle, he was enough of a practical politician to recognize that it could not bring any advantage to Prussia to enter a priori into opposition with such a Power as Imperial France. He rather sought to keep on good terms with Louis Napoleon as long as possible. With skilful management, it was to be hoped that the Emperor of the French, who wished to bind Prussia to himself, would be won over to acknowledge her claims

on Schleswig-Holstein. For Prussia's plan of reform in Germany it was not unimportant to be able to give Austria to understand how it lay in the hands of the Court of Berlin to find support in Paris. The carrying out of such tactics was very difficult, especially as a large part of the Prussian bureaucracy, those who possessed influence on the foreign policy, held quite different opinions. Justus von Gruner passionately defended the opinion that for all the German states the principal aim was to break the power of Napoleonic France as soon as possible, and that to this task the differences of opinion on policy among the German Federal States must be subordinated, including the Schleswig-Holstein question.¹ A private letter from Gruner to Bernstorff on March 2nd, 1861, is very characteristic. He asks what is to be the policy of Prussia, whether it is "opposition to Napoleonic France," or if it is "a Liberal policy, the object of which would be to carry on its work in Germany by the sufferance of France, but without an understanding with her."

He continues: "There is only one for me, the first. It is not my opinion, but it is an article of political faith. All other questions have but a subordinate value in my eyes. We must come to an understanding with Austria and the other German Governments. We must emphasize the National side, and avoid all discord. We must form the essence or germ of a coalition in Germany with Austria and the other states, and not carry on a 'Tendenzpolitik.'² We must unite and organize all elements of opposition to France. Every other policy seems madness to me.

¹ Wirklicher Geheimrat and Under Secretary of State, Justus von Gruner. "Reminiscences of my Life." "Deutsche Revue," 1901.

² A Tendenzpolitik is a policy the object of which is to carry on some fixed principle, irrespective of the opportunities which may arise from the situation of the moment.—Tr.

As long as there is a prospect of a policy in that sense, I shall be able to remain here. But if this prospect disappears, then your Excellency will agree with me that I can no longer go on with you on the road which I look upon as the road to ruin."

Though in another letter to Bernstorff Gruner declares that he desired to strengthen the position of Prussia towards Austria, still, in practice, his policy would have brought him quite into the Austrian line.¹

The meeting of King Wilhelm with Louis Napoleon at Compiègne, which had long been settled, Bernstorff could hardly desire to prevent, as he had arranged the programme for the conversations there, and it had received the Sovereign's approval. The integrity of German territory and the principle of non-intervention in German affairs by Foreign Powers were mentioned. Austrian claims in Italian affairs were to be maintained, as far as Prussian interests permitted. If the recognition of Italy was not to be made before the Neapolitan and Roman questions were settled, if there were no surrender of Venice allowed, that is, none that exposed or endangered the strategical frontier of Germany, then, on this important point, a limit in the Napoleonic plans was to be drawn. Under such conditions the meeting bore the character only of courtly courtesy. King Wilhelm's observations concerning his conversations with Louis Napoleon at Compiègne, of which we find an abstract among Bernstorff's papers, are extremely interesting. The paper should be carefully studied in every detail, in order to understand its significance.

¹ Gruner had considered Bernstorff at first as an absolute follower of his own views. His disappointment that this did not prove altogether true explains the slighting remarks about Bernstorff in his "Reminiscences." His display of nervousness, which sometimes amounted to great irritation, may be accounted for by this.

*King Wilhelm's notes of his interviews with Napoleon III.
on October 11th, 1861.*

"The Emperor Louis Napoleon had, in accordance with my desire, my reception at the frontier, so that an official reception throughout the journey, as well as at Compiègne, was avoided.

"During the visit the Emperor evaded, it appeared, any long conversation on political affairs. The following notes prove this. I have tried to make them as accurate as possible.

"The Emperor asked me at the first dinner: '*Croyez vous que l'affaire d'un traité de commerce s'arrangera ?*' I replied that that I much regretted that the last meeting of the French Plenipotentiaries had not been propitious; I hoped, however, that as a favourable solution of the question was of equal importance for both countries, they would give mutual prospects of *bonne volonté*, and thereby reach the goal. The Emperor answered that he was just as much convinced of the importance of the question, but that so much knowledge of details was necessary to understand the whole matter, that it was beyond him. When he was told that Prussia wished merchandise to be assessed in such a way because a thread of silk was spun with wool or cotton, he did not understand a word of it. I said that it was the same with me, but that I thought of the general importance, and believed that perhaps after the difficulties of the Commercial Treaty between England and France this new export was greatly to be desired for France. The Emperor did not agree with this, and on the last day he reverted again to the enormous number of advantages for France. I believe he spoke of one hundred million more which Paris alone has exported to England. On my

representation that he would state his definite wishes to Monsieur Leclercq, '*D'arriver à bon port,*' he assented in a very friendly manner. After I had depicted our difficult situation on account of our dependence on the Zollverein, he quite agreed. On the second day he asked : '*Vous aurez lu les assertions au parlement anglais, que j'ai fait un traité avec la Sardaigne pour annexer l'île de Sardaigne. Ils sont comme les enfants, les Anglais, ils croient tout ce qu'une tête chaude avance. Il n'y a pas un mot de vrai dans tout cela ; je ne pense pas à la Sardaigne et je n'y penserai pas !*' I replied that I had followed the debates, of course, and had wondered that the English Ministry had not expressed themselves more decidedly against such inventions, as it must be easy for them to learn the truth from the Emperor. I could not deny that something of the sort had been believed by us, and I was glad to hear that it was not so. (?)

"The Emperor asked me the same day : '*Que savez vous des Duchés allemands de Denemark ?*' I said that he knew how a provisional agreement had been come to which would last until Dertmark stepped forward with new proposals, or did not keep to the latest stipulations. The latter it was feared according to certain indications, as in spite of the last stipulations, they wished to decree new duties and laws without a meeting of the states. If this should occur, we should be just as far as we were six weeks ago. The whole question of the Danish Duchies would be settled for ever in a short time, in my opinion, if France and England and Russia declared decidedly that it was a German question, in which Germany was in the right, and that Denmark would never have the support of the three Powers. The Emperor remarked that I knew he had always acted in this sense, to which I assented. I could only explain the continued opposition

of Denmark by the fact that it privately hoped for support some day. I further remarked that the world busied itself much with the King of Sweden's visit to France. The Emperor spoke of '*des articles de journaux absurdes.*' The King was a peculiar man; he was tremendously pleased with Paris and Chalons, '*ce qui n'a pas trop amusé l'Angleterre.*'

"He further inquired of me on the second day: '*Avez vous pris une résolution par rapport à la reconnaissance de l'Italie?*' I replied that I had resolved to make the recognition dependent on the pacification of the whole of Italy, particularly of Naples, and that when this had taken place I should always have to consider my position towards Austria. '*Ah, l'Autriche est bien malade,*' replied the Emperor.

"When I answered: '*Oui, c'est un grande malheur,*' he did not seem pleased with my answer, for he did not reply, so I asked him what news he had from Naples. He said: '*Elles ne sont pas bonnes, c'est un état de choses désolant, mais viendra pourtant à bout. Mais Rome. Rome! c'est une question irrésoluble; mon Clergé est très-sensible sur cette question, je ne peux rien faire?*' I said that as long as his troops were in Rome there was nothing to fear for the safety of the Pope. . . . '*Aussi je ne pense pas à les retirer,*' he replied. The last question was: '*Que pensez vous du National Verein? est-il dangereux?*' I said that I did not consider it dangerous as long as it was not raised up into martyrdom, as it had been in '*Hesse grand ducale.*' While it only writes and talks we can afford to let it do so; but if it acts in a revolutionary way, it would come into collision with me. '*La Prusse pourtant n'a pas à se plaindre du lui,*' said the Emperor. I answered that I knew, of course, that the National Verein wished to tempt me to such a policy as that of Victor Emanuel; however, this

did not lie in my political principles, and then the Emperor would allow that it was easier to overthrow four governments than thirty-two. Thereupon he smiled, and remained silent. I quickly asked: '*Que savez vous de la Pologne?*' He answered: 'Things are very complicated there, and the Russians very "maladroit."' I replied: '*C'est un grand malheur que cette question polonaise pour nous tous qui nous possédons des parties de ce pays!*' The Emperor made no reply.

"By this Polish *réplique*, by my answer about the thirty-two Princes, and by the non-recognition phrase, I believe I gave the Emperor the right clue to my policy.

"Schloss Babelsberg.

"(Signed), W. 11/10/61."

The King was, as is seen, very reserved at this meeting. The French Press made Bernstorff chiefly responsible for this. It said that owing to his long residence in London as Prussian Minister, he had acquired English views. He contradicted these reports in the official Press. In a private letter to Prince Heinrich VII. of Reuss,¹ who was temporarily in charge of the Legation in Paris, he had, before the interview at Compiègne, guarded against the report that he was blindly attached to the English alliance, and on principle an opponent of France.² "I am no sentimentalist," he writes, "or given to a policy of sympathy or of antipathy; I only act according to existing circumstances and in the interest of Prussia when the question arises for choosing this or that alliance."

After King Wilhelm's coronation at Königsberg, the re-

¹ Prince Heinrich VII., Reuss, born 1825, became Councillor of Legation in Paris in 1854, and, after holding various diplomatic offices, became German Ambassador to Constantinople in 1877, and was exchanged to Vienna in 1878. Retired from office in 1894.

² Bernstorff to Reuss. Stintenburg, October 2nd, 1861. Private letter.

form of the German Federation attracted general interest, and this demanded Bernstorff's entire strength. The plans cherished by the King have been mentioned; but his project seemed doomed from the beginning. The influence of the Saxon Minister in Austria, where Count von Rechberg was chief of the Cabinet, as well as in the small States, was unfavourable to the plans of Prussia. In the middle of October the ambitious Saxon politician placed his programme for remodelling the Constitution of the German Federation before the German Governments. The chief points were: to replace the Federal Diet by an annual Conference of Ministers from all the German States, to call in elected members from all German representative assemblies, and to institute a Federal Court to decide constitutional affairs. Rechberg was, at first, not disinclined to it, but in face of the storm of indignation which rose against it in the small States, he rejected it. Herr von Biegeleben, the fanatical enemy of Prussia in the Chancellery at Vienna, condemned Beust's plan in his public reply to the Saxon Minister on November 5th. Meanwhile, a Conference took place about a reform of the Imperial Constitution on the basis of a smaller Federation. At the first news of such plans—Herr von Roggenbach had communicated his draft to Herr von Biegeleben in confidence—the old passions pertaining to Prince Schwarzenberg's time flamed up afresh. A harsh refusal from Biegeleben followed, but Prussia remained firm. Bernstorff's despatch of December 20th, 1861, which by an intrigue of Beust's was made public in the "*Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*," maintained Prussia's standpoint to the uttermost. Since 1849, the right of Prussia to form a smaller Federation had not been so forcibly stated. It caused great excitement in the small States, and all murmured at "Prussia's unheard-of arrogance." Bernstorff re-

garded the storm with the calm of a good conscience. A letter on the subject to Reuss, who was still at Paris, clearly proves his decision and his thorough national sentiments :—

Count Bernstorff to Prince Reuss.

“BERLIN, *January 13th*, 1862.

“... The courier leaves to-day, he ought to have gone long ago, and he will take you the papers on the German question, which you will have learnt in the meantime from the newspapers. That the Press of the Grossdeutsch¹ Party would make great noise, was a foregone conclusion.

“Our own Press, on the contrary, has accepted my despatch with favour, and even the ‘*Kreuz Zeitung*’ has dedicated an appreciative article to it, as you will see. It will interest me greatly to learn the opinion of the French Press about it and our position towards the German question. I lay more weight upon the fact that it should be influenced favourably towards us. I therefore beg you to exert your strength to effect this. A batch of documents will go to you to-day by the courier, or else very shortly, destined for the French Press, and will, I hope, contribute towards this end, or will, at least, deter it from unfavourable and hostile judgment, and make it accessible to arguments in our favour.

“Our chief argument in reference to foreign countries is, that internal German constitutional affairs concern no one else, and that Germany has a perfect right to manage them for herself. But besides this, the French must be made to understand that Prussia makes pretensions to nothing unreasonable, and that it does not lie in the interest of France to side with Austria against Prussia,

¹ The Grossdeutsch Party, the opposite of the Kleindeutsch Party, was in favour of a union of Germany based on a Federation which would include both Austria and Prussia.—Tr.

thereby contributing to make Prussia and Germany subject to the former, and that France taking the part of the Governments of the middle states and Courts, in order to prevent a great and united Germany, could only lead to the estrangement of the German people, and perhaps bring about just that which she would wish to avoid."

Bernstorff's second letter enters more fully into his plans :

Count Bernstorff to Prince Reuss.

BERLIN, *February 6th*, 1862.

"... My overwhelming amount of business has made it impossible for me to recur to your very interesting letter of the 16th, concerning Austria. What Prince Metternich said to you proves that he was informed in a extremely one-sided and bitter way as to our relations with Austria.¹ Count Rechberg has, from the moment that he noticed that I would take up a decided position on the question of German reform, distorted and condemned all our negotiations in a most hostile spirit; as for instance, in the Servian affair, and in all German matters. When I spoke of concessions which Austria must make to enable us to become more closely united to them, and eventually to render her military assistance, he declared that Prussia stood more in need of help from Austria; but that she is no longer bound to give it, because Prussia in 1859 had not acted according to Article 47 of the Vienna Treaty, and had not let herself be drawn into the war against France. I have always said, however, that I desired nothing more urgently than that we might be joined more closely to Austria to repulse certain dangers, but that there must be such concessions from Austria as to make it possible

¹ Among other things Metternich has said that he himself was not satisfied with the last Austrian Note, but if Prussia went on in her present course, a civil war would be inevitable.

to obtain from our Landtag means for a war for Venice. When I said to Karolyi¹ that he was here long enough to recognize this for himself, he replied that this was quite true, and that he always said so to Rechberg, whereupon I answered that I could desire nothing more from him. But how can Rechberg² assert that there is no further talk about Venice? He expects us to guarantee the whole Austrian monarchy, without making the smallest concessions to us, as you can see from his despatch of 5th November. We are not even permitted the paltry alternative lead, but share it with a third. He is now inciting the whole lot of middle states, including Hesse and Nassau, against us, as may be seen from the enclosed Identical Note of February 2nd, which they delivered here. Such doings will lead to civil war. I have declared and always shall declare that we do not intend to do anything by force, but we are decided not to avoid war again, as we did in 1850, should the other side thrust it upon us. It goes without saying that it will then be a matter of life and death, and which side will suffer defeat is doubtful, to me, at least. Under such circumstances we must have allies, or at least secure the neutrality of the other Powers, and France is, of course, the most important Power. We get hints from different sides which suggest that Austria is drawing nearer to France, and that ultimately they will join hands over us.

"I have been told that French troops will shortly enter Naples on pretence of keeping down brigandage. I can well imagine that Austria, to make sure of France, permits Naples to be taken either for Plon Plon or for another, and thereby seeks to revenge herself on Sardinia at the

¹ Count Aloys Karolyi, born 1825, died 1889. Austrian diplomatist and statesman.—Tr.

² Johann Bernhard, Count Rechberg, born 1806, died 1879. Austrian diplomatist and statesman.—Tr.

same time. Mexico is also a point of contact, and La Tour has shown me a private letter from Thouvenel, in which he says: '*Que la candidature de l'Archiduc Max Ferdinand avait été acceptée à Vienne avec effusion et reconnaissance.*' If you, my dear Prince, have the opportunity again to speak with Metternich confidentially, tell him that the King, as well as myself, wishes nothing more earnestly than that Austria should come to an understanding with us, but that with such impudent pretensions as those of Rechberg it is absolutely impossible. We would even guarantee the whole of Austria if the Viennese Court agreed to a closer connection of the non-Austrian Germany with Prussia, and did not insist on condemning Germany to everlasting wretchedness in order to serve the egoistic interest of Austria. But if Austria will hold to this, and will not extend her hand to us in any way, then we shall think more of our own interests and leave Austria to her fate. The declarations at Teplitz are expressly to demand certain equivalents which hitherto Austria has refused. A recognition by us of Italy would probably be very unpleasant for Austria."

Count Rechberg, who had soon changed his opinion about the reform of the Diet, placed himself at the head of the separatistic plans against Prussia, and decided to lend them the support of Austria. The result of this fraternization of Austria and the lesser states was the Identical Note presented in Berlin on February 2nd by seven Governments, which set Prussia to rights in an authoritative manner, and reminded her of the failure of the lesser Confederation of 1849. Bernstorff did not, of course, allow himself to be browbeaten, and in his Edict of February 12th, 1862, he firmly declared that Prussia would not be turned aside from the course she was taking. "Prussia," he writes, "has always shown the greatest respect for the rights of others, especially of her Confederates,

and considers that she has the right to expect that this act of mistrust on one side and of presumption on the other (the Identical Note), will soon be estimated at its real value. It seems to us that the impression abroad and the reaction upon Germany has not been taken into proper consideration by the Governments who took this step. We fear that the effect on the general interests of Germany will not be favourable, but we must decline to be responsible for them, since we did not omit to point out in Vienna at the proper time what view we should take of such a step against us." And in his despatch to Werther, Bernstorff criticised severely the views held by the Cabinet in Vienna concerning the presidency of the Diet. Austria claimed it as her right. "To such a privilege, which would be far removed from the right of presidency of the Federation," he writes, "Prussia cannot possibly attach as much importance as seems to be the case with the author of the 'Remarks on the Dresden draft,' who declares that Austria, with undiminished dignity, would renounce the right of the permanent presidency, if the whole territory of the two German Great Powers were drawn into a defensive bond.

"But for Prussia," concluded Bernstorff, "whose alternate right is uncontested by the European Great Powers and by Austria, and which has accorded the lead of the business part of the German Diet to the Austrian Government of her own free will, the making a change in the presidency is of no special moment. It cannot be taken as an equivalent for the guarantee of the whole of the Austrian possessions. The Vienna Cabinet has, moreover, derogated from its dignity on former occasions and renounced her claim to the leadership of the Diet without exacting such far-reaching conditions. Such renunciation has taken place repeatedly, especially at the sitting of the Federal Diet on

July 12th, 1848, and again on the occasion of the foundation of the Provisional Central Committee.

"After the final understanding on this question between Prince Felix Schwarzenberg and myself on December 30th, 1849, the two German Great Powers undertake in the same manner the carrying out the Central Power for the German Diet in the joint name of the Federal Governments. And how much the Vienna Cabinet then agreed with the Prussian question of reform of the Confederation is proved in paragraphs two and three of the compact. First, it showed as the object of the interim: The maintenance of the German Confederation as a union according to the law of nations, and decided that during the interval the German constitutional affairs should be settled by mutual agreement, as all those affairs (organic arrangements, etc.), which according to Article 6 of the Federal Act usually came before the Plenum¹ of the Diet."

Bernstorff did not in the least shrink from resuming the position he had maintained towards Austria in 1849 and 1850. His proud utterances can be regarded as a retaliation for the treatment he had received from Schwarzenberg. The small states were soon to learn that Bernstorff would not follow Beust one step on the road of German reform. In his answer to the Identical Note from the German Governments on February 14th he says that Prussia, in the fulfilment of her Federal duties, and in her national duty, stood second to no German state. But she most decidedly declined the suggested reform, "In the eyes of the Prussian Government," he said in his refusal, "its proposals of reform in the despatch of December 20th last endangered the existence of the Federation much less than the realization of the plans suggested in the Identical Note, namely, a Constitution for the whole Federation

¹ Full Session of the Diet.—Tr.

with real power of execution, joint legislation, and joint parliamentary representation would easily lead to an attempt of still further political union with the non-German provinces, as this has already been noticeable in the despatch of the Imperial Austrian Cabinet dated November 5th."

In the Circular Despatch of February 21st, 1862, to the Prussian Ministers at the different German Courts, Bernstorff again vindicated the right of each German state to conclude a closer union, against the accusation that there was a surrender of sovereignty in it, and that these states could not count as independent members of the Confederation any more, and which they were required to be by Article 11 of the Federal Act. If, he continued, according to the rights of the Federation this sovereignty is reconcilable with the restriction not to form alliances against the interests of Germany, then it will not suffer by some free concessions to the guidance of the smaller union; for the smaller union only wishes for a greater security of Germany against outside Powers. The Identical Note must still bring the proof that by the accession to a smaller union a "subjective relation" is created. Bernstorff goes on to say:—

"The taking over of the chief command of the single contingents of states in the smaller union need not be such a 'subjective' treaty. In the present Federation there is the precedent that the states which are united in an army corps by contract give the command of their contingent to a state from their midst. Hanover has recently endeavoured to secure the permanent command in the corps to which she belongs. The negotiations of the Würzburg Conference openly point to this end, that all except the Prussian and Austrian corps should form a permanent chief command, with Bavaria at their head, and thus make a closer union within the Federation. There

has been no protest against this as an infringement of Federal rights. And these same Würzburg states, which in the Identical Note bring forward Article 11 of the Federal Act, have found no objections in it to their own similar plans. We further know nothing in the Federal law opposed to the taking over of the diplomatic representation of the smaller states by the presidency of the smaller Federation. To stigmatize this and the military command as an 'act of submission' is an utterly arbitrary interpretation, hardly worth serious refutation.

"We will not close our discussion without recalling the position which the Cabinet at Vienna took in regard to the question of the reform of the Constitution of the Confederation when this Constitution had another provisional form. For apart from the latter circumstance there is an important analogy as regards the present situation. Prince Felix Schwarzenberg frankly recognized in the programme which he laid before the Reichstag of Kremsier on September 27th, 1848, that by the union of the German states of Austria with the Crown lands in a centralizing united Constitution, it was necessary to reorganize the relations to Germany, and that both sides would have to remodel their Constitutions before this could be done.

"The centralizing Constitution of February 29th of this year places Austria in a similar position, and her statesmen will find it difficult to define the position which the Imperial state would have to assume if the reform of the Confederation should be brought forward. We, therefore, find the real significance of the last step in the fact that the Cabinet of Vienna shows how it intends to negate every serious effort by us in this direction."

Savigny,¹ the Prussian Minister at Dresden, was instructed to reproach Beust with his action contrary to the rules of

¹ Karl Friedrich Savigny, born 1814, died 1875. Prussian diplomatist.—Tr.

diplomacy.¹ Bernstorff writes: "Beust hastened, without asking consent, to publish the despatch of December 20th, in the 'Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung,' as well as memorials of his own. He thus afforded outward excuse, at least, to other Governments to take a step for which an excuse has been sought in vain, and in contradiction to his former actions, he without hesitation concurred in this step. We had good reason then to reproach him, as Count von Hohenthal's Note of February 2nd explained, and emphasized more than it excused. In our reply to the Saxon Minister on February 14th, in reference to the Identical Note of February 2nd, we confined ourselves to the expression of regret that he had been a party to the protest in that Note. After this considerate reply, *we expected that Freiherr von Beust would have abstained from further steps against us. There was certainly no necessity for him to take steps with them.*

"The Saxon Minister, however, observed no such reserve. He rather preferred to send a despatch which, with the exception of the insinuations in the reply from Austria of February 21st, exceeded in sharpness all the replies of the protesting Governments. It informed us, among other things, of the intention of the Identical Note, that Prussia's efforts at reform should turn out abortive, and, indeed, were made so. That under these circumstances a very decided answer from us became necessary, requires no further explanation."

King Wilhelm himself ordered a firm tone to be maintained towards Beust:—

King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

"BERLIN, April 4th, 1862.

"Should you see Beust, I beg you to destroy all illusions as to any change in my German policy in

¹ Bernstorff's despatch to Savigny. Berlin, March 28th, 1862.

consequence of the change of Ministers. Tell him distinctly that what was stated in my decree to my new Ministers is irrevocable.

“WILHELM.”

Bernstorff declined further correspondence about the Identical Note. In his despatch to Werther,¹ he referred to Rechberg's assertion that the Prussian Government had not known what to reply. The answer, he declared, was short because the dignity of Prussia forbade further controversy. The struggle over this matter had been rendered difficult for Bernstorff by the conduct of the Prussian Landtag. The members seemed satisfied, indeed, that there was no war with Austria, but they continued their agitation against Austria in the Press and in Parliament. The attitude of the Cabinet at Vienna in the Hesse question offered fresh occasion for it. Parliament wished Prussia to take up the Kleindeutsch programme, and carry it through in negotiation with the German states, undeterred by opposition. The Prussian Government, under the circumstances, could not comply with this. Bernstorff opposed it, though exposing himself to being called a “weak person.” “How could Prussia protest against the legality of the Diet now, after having, with the other German States, acknowledged it in 1851 after the contributions to it had been voted by the Prussian Landtag and all German Chambers. The Commission was therefore informed that the whole proposition was inexpedient for the time.”²

Louis Napoleon followed the debates on the affairs in Germany with great interest. The antagonism between the two great German Powers was all the more satis-

¹ Despatch from Bernstorff to Werther. Berlin, March 5th, 1862.

² Sybel, as cited above, vol. ii., 408.

factory to him as it rendered his anxiety superfluous lest Prussia should undertake to guarantee the non-German possessions of Austria. And as he rightly regarded Prussia as the Power of the future, he hoped to obtain her co-operation in his plans. The meeting at Compiègne had not, it is true, fulfilled his hopes, but it had not discouraged them. He confidently expected that the force of circumstances would gradually draw Prussia to his side. In the Schleswig-Holstein question it will be shown how the Emperor continued unswerving in his efforts to win the Court of Berlin. He had in December, 1861, discussed internal German politics with Prince Reuss, and recommended the introduction of "Universal suffrage" in Prussia, so that the Conservatives in the country could have the majority against the Liberal townspeople.¹ Immediately after the death of Count Pourtalès, when Reuss became Chargé d'Affaires, he had conversations with Louis Napoleon about the reform of the Federation and the position of Prussia.

"Yesterday," writes Reuss on February 14th, "I had the honour of hunting at Fontainebleau with the Emperor. Before the start, he asked me what Prussia thought of doing about the united action of Austria and the smaller German states, which he regretted very much.² I replied that when Prussia was asked her intentions, the Cabinet had declared them openly and frankly; it would not revert again to what it had already stated.

"As I was returning with the Emperor by train, I continued the interrupted conversation of the morning, asking him whether he had taken the trouble to read the correspondence between the Prussian Cabinet and those of Vienna and Dresden. He said yes, and that he thought

¹ Reuss to Bernstorff. December 7th, 1861. Confidential letter.

² *Ibid.*, Paris, February 14th, 1861. Confidential letter.

the Prussian views in the despatch of December 20th excellent; that it contained a possible solution of the whole question.

"I think," continued the Emperor, "that the decisive moment for the future of Prussia has come. If the King does not make use of it, he exposes himself to two evils; if Prussia bows to Austrian influence, she will lose her authority over the smaller states, or make herself unpopular in Germany and never again find the clue to the national and Liberal ideas of the German people. The King ought to seize the opportunity now offered to retain the upper hand in Germany. I have nothing to say against the expansion of Prussia, nor an increase of her power. I can, on the contrary, only approve of such an object. You know that I have always been interested in Prussia. The internal circumstances of the German Federation are nothing to me, and I will not mix myself up with them.

"There is, however, one thing which concerns me closely, which I cannot regard with indifference. They write me from Berlin that a combination is being discussed that the German Federation should guarantee all Austrian non-German possessions, as an equivalent for concessions which Austria will make to Prussia. Such a guarantee would alter the balance of power in Europe. Upon such a foundation Germany would become too great a Power and would hamper the full action of all other Powers. There would be no political action in foreign affairs possible without the consent of Germany.

"For example, if complications arose in the East, or a conflict were in prospect between France and Austria in Italy, I should have all Germany against me, and I cannot, of course, permit such a possibility."¹

¹ "In the course of the conversation the Emperor asked me if what he had said to the King at Compiègne had been approved in Germany, to

"... The Emperor has really no intention of mixing himself up in our affairs, and what is more, he wishes well to the ideas with which your Excellency began your despatch of 20th December. My convictions are that we can count upon the neutrality of France, almost with certainty, in the event of a conflict between Prussia and Austria and the smaller states.

"In your private letter of the 6th, you say that the Prussian Cabinet may go so far, perhaps, as to guarantee the Austrian possessions, also those not belonging to the German Federation, if Austria will make the concession for Prussia to have a free hand in Germany, as it seems this would be the only way to attain the solution of this difficult question. But if Louis Napoleon opposes such a guarantee, as he says he will, then the friendly understanding with Austria would be dangerous.

"I cannot believe that the Emperor, who has expressed his opinion clearly and definitely to me, which, if one considers the situation only as regarding France is perfectly comprehensible, will readily change his views. Notwithstanding the good disposition which I find everywhere towards us, the solution of the German question, on the ground of a guarantee to Austria, will be almost impossible."

Reuss reported another confidential conversation to Bernstorff on February 20th, 1862:—

which I warmly assented. He also said that he had forgotten to say something in that conversation which Thouvenel had begged him to say. He had wished to observe when describing the position of the King in Germany: 'This King especially and above all others represents German nationality. . . .'

"The Emperor also asked Reuss the odd question, why Austria, which was so little German, should so violently oppose Prussia's views. Reuss replied that the jealousy which Vienna cherished against Prussia was of ancient date. Austria was determined to defend her position, but she will not find the Prussia of 1850 confronting her. The latter is resolved not to be thrust into the position which Austria wishes her to have."

"From what the Emperor Louis Napoleon has said, as well as Monsieur Thouvenel, it seems that they would like to encourage us in our proceedings about German reform. I reported my conversation with the Emperor on the 7th to the Minister, and he said that he supposed I had been satisfied with what his master had said. As to the Federation guaranteeing all Austria, the Emperor had been under the mistaken impression that negotiations had already taken place between Prussia and Austria. The Minister has enlightened the Emperor on the state of affairs. He could declare almost for certain, that though no agreement had been signed, some secret assurances had been exchanged between the Cabinet at Vienna and the Würzburg states, whereby the latter promised to guarantee all the Austrian possessions. These negotiations have been carried out with great cleverness at Vienna, partly behind the backs of the different Austrian representatives, who were very indignant about it.

"The Emperor said to me yesterday evening at the Court ball, that he had read the Prussian answer, which was moderately drawn up and very decisive. He thinks that the Würzburger will give up the struggle, the wisest thing they could do.

"If after conscientious examination of my observations, I notice a favourable attitude of the Government towards Prussia, and if as I have already written to your Excellency, I believe I can go so far as to hope for an eventual neutrality of France, I do not venture, in spite of all this, to assert that Louis Napoleon's favourable frame of mind would cause him, under all circumstances, to relinquish the demand of compensations for permitting the expansion of Prussia. I can but say that they will let us go forward, perhaps even encourage us and make show of the most disinterested sentiments. What would come of it if we

really entered into conflict, and it turned to our advantage, will depend upon the momentary position on the political chessboard”

Prince Reuss's communications clearly show with what interest the Emperor of the French followed the development of German affairs. One can understand the difficulties which beset Prussia in carrying on a vigorous policy and at the same time trying to effect internal reforms in Germany, and to maintain her position abroad. This explains Bernstorff's caution in going to work. The way towards the unification of Germany was strewn with all manner of difficulties, and the struggle for a reform of the Federation had to cease for the moment. The only way out of chaos, one could see even then, was to fight with the sword in the hand, as was done in 1866. But such a severance of the Gordian knot could not be made then, because the new organization of the Prussian army was a prime condition, that organization which King Wilhelm so faithfully struggled for. The question arises why, under all these circumstances, they should have entered, in this discussion, on the affairs of the German Constitution. Lord Augustus Loftus, the English Minister, put this question to Bernstorff, who rightly replied that the despatch of December had been an answer to the Austrian proposals concerning the Constitution, and that Prussia had been obliged to avow her colours, and he frankly said to him that he had resolved to hold by what he had stated in his despatch. The situation was far more favourable for Prussia than it had been in 1850. Only in case of extreme necessity, if no other solution were possible based on the *Kleindeutsch* programme, would he consent to German dualism with the North for Prussia and the South for Austria, but that Prussia must have

unlimited control over her sphere of influence.¹ In any case Prussia had tried to offer her hand in peace, and the responsibility for its failure fell on those who had not taken it!

During the struggle of the German Governments about reform, the events at Cassel forced Prussia to take up a fresh stand in the Hesse question. The King and Bernstorff were in complete agreement that the misgovernment there must at last be summarily dealt with.² Prussia wished the Elector to restore the Constitution of 1831, which the people demanded. Those resolutions which were against the law of the Federation must, however, be eliminated. At first Austria, who did not wish Prussia alone to make herself popular in Germany, declared herself ready to take mutual steps, but later, when the controversies about the reform became acute, she returned to her old position. First of all, the two great German Powers made a joint proposal to the Federal Diet for the restoration of the Constitution. The Elector was much alarmed, but he soon recovered when he saw that the decision on this point was long drawn out, and that Austria seemed inclined to withdraw from joint action. From that moment he, the Elector, renewed his passive opposition. Bernstorff made the King's wishes known at Vienna in May, that he would suffer no delay. As Austria did not wish to send a Prussian and Austrian general jointly to Cassel, Prussia acted alone. A series of orders from the King, mostly jotted down in pencil, which are

¹ He returned to the ideas of the Convention of September 30th, 1849.

² It is amusing to read in Lord Augustus Loftus's "Reminiscences of a Diplomatist," how he, the English Minister, warned Bernstorff not to take part in the Hesse question; it was no longer a Federal question, but a *European* one, from which war might easily arise. It was thus that all matters were discussed by the English Minister.

among Bernstorff's papers, throw a very clear and vivid light on this affair :—

*King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.*¹

"BERLIN, February 12th, 1862.

"'Au fort du combat,' we forgot the reason of your coming to me to-day ; that is, the debate on Cassel in the Lower House. Will you send me a few lines to say how you think of expressing yourself to-morrow ?

"I enclose part of a letter from the Grand Duke of Baden, sent to me through an adjutant. The other part I will read to you later. It treats of Roggenbach's idea, already known to us, that we are to agree to enter into negotiations with Austria. . . .

"WILHELM."

King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

[Autograph.]

"BERLIN, February 17th, 1862.²

"I recommend the formulated proposal to the Federal Diet to be speedily despatched to Vienna, demanding the dissolution of the Constitution of 1852 in Hesse, and the restoration of that of 1851. There is no time to lose.

"WILHELM."

King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

"BERLIN, February 20th, 1862.

"Did I, during the reading of the despatch to Vienna yesterday on the affairs of Cassel, not hear it, or has the

¹ A second order on the same day summoned Bernstorff to the King about three o'clock, as the Hesse-Cassel affair would come on in the Lower House, and the German question would be drawn into it.

² This is the first of the orders written by the King in little pencilled notes.

passage not been inserted, that in case Austria will not make the proposal with us at the Diet, Prussia would do so alone? This is what I wish stated as résumé.

“WILHELM.”

The miniature Cæsarian madness which had seized the Elector supplied the arms to Prussia with which she won the victory. The Elector had ordained that no one in Hesse should be allowed to vote who had not previously acknowledged the Constitution of 1860. Austria and Prussia now moved an inhibition against this in the Federal Diet. At the same time Prussia declared that if no decision could be arrived at, General von Willisen would be sent to Cassel, that is, that Prussia would go forward independently.

King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

“BERLIN, May 9th, 1862.

“The inclosed telegram shows that our plaster has drawn. We must not, therefore, hide *our* light under a bushel at the coming discussion in the newspapers.

“I am going to Babelsberg this evening at 10.30. Telegraph to me directly news comes from Frankfort a/ M. or if my presence should be desired here. If not, I shall return on Sunday evening.

“WILHELM.”

King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

“BERLIN, May 12th, 1862.

“The Minister of War has just told me his proposal to you, that if the Federal Diet procrastinates again tomorrow, Usedom should peremptorily set a term, after which Prussia would enter on her coercive measures. I see no objection; the only thing to consider is whether Usedom,

le cas échéant, is to make this declaration at once, or if he is to report first about to-morrow's sitting. What is your opinion?

"WILHELM."

As the Elector had obtained of the Federal Diet a respite of the decision on Prussia's last proposal, and had become strengthened in his defiance, Willisen left for Cassel on May 11th. The General's reception there ended with a rude refusal of the Elector to accede to the demands of Prussia. He refused to make any change in the Ministry. The Diet now decided to consent to the inhibition. There is a letter from the Crown Prince, in which he adjures the Minister to do what he could to obtain satisfaction for Prussia.

The Crown Prince to Count Bernstorff.

"NEUES PALAIS, May 15th, 1862.

"Dear Count,

"I learned through the King this morning how rudely and unreasonably the Elector of Hesse behaved towards Willisen, and how he even threw his Majesty's letter on the table. I think that not only a letter of apology ought to be sent by an Extraordinary Plenipotentiary from Hesse as a necessary *reparation d'honneur*, but that Prussia should demand the dismissal of the Cabinet which is so hostile to us.

"Perhaps the Elector will give way to the Federal decision, that is to the influence of Würzburg, but this, in my opinion, is no concession to us, for it is the policy of the Elector and of our enemies among the German Governments so to weaken our independent action that the lead should be again taken by the Federation. In my eyes, giving way to the decision of the Diet is no satisfaction to Prussia, which had independently turned to

the Elector. It seems to me that, for the sake of our honour, the hostile Cabinet should be dismissed; anything else would only be a defeat for us. The matter moves me greatly, and I cannot be silent at this important time. I beg you, as an old acquaintance, to lay my opinion to heart.

“Always yours sincerely,

“FRIEDRICH WILHELM.”

The King now ordered the mobilization of two army corps, and the Prussian Minister at Cassel received orders, at the same time, to demand the dismissal of the hostile Ministry. It has been rightly said that the situation, and the further resistance of the Elector, could easily have led Prussia into war against a part of the small states and Austria as well. Sybel, in his “Foundation of the German Empire,” is of opinion that the Prussian Cabinet, and Bernstorff especially, would hardly have ventured on such a war. He says: “At that time Herr von Bismarck had just been exchanged from St. Petersburg to Berlin. Count Bernstorff asked his opinion. Bismarck replied: ‘The fact of the Elector throwing a royal letter on the table is not a good *casus belli*; but if you wish war, then appoint me your Under Secretary of State, and I will promise to bring about civil war within a month.’ But Count Bernstorff drew back horrified.”¹ If one were to draw from this the conclusion that Bernstorff had a horror of any war with Austria, it would be a great mistake. Bernstorff’s letters to Reuss in January and February have sufficiently shown the determination with which he regarded the possibility of war with Austria. It was the somewhat frivolous way of treating such a very grave affair which affected him unpleasantly in Bismarck’s words.

¹ Sybel as cited above. Vol. ii., 421.

If he only wished Prussia to begin a war under the pressure of necessity, it is all the more to his credit. It was his firm determination in the Hesse affair not to draw back before Austria.

In a letter to Reuss he says :—

“The Hesse affair has entered upon a decisive stage, out of which we must come as victors, if we would not suffer a great moral defeat. We have shown that it is our serious intention by having two army corps made ready to march. If we can obtain satisfaction in the affair itself, as well as in the treatment of Willisen, without resorting to arms, so much the better. If that is not the case, we shall use force. All the intrigues of our opponent have concentrated at this point, and Austria, though seemingly with us, acts against us in the dark. A decision, therefore, must be arrived at, and we are for the right constitutional measures. I consider it a favourable coincidence that we are bound to France by a commercial treaty against the intrigues of Austria and the Middle States, and can, therefore, count upon a benevolent neutrality from her. If she followed another policy, she would only drive us into the arms of Austria, with whom we should then make a united front against the west. I beg you to represent the state of affairs from this point of view, and at the same time to explain that we seek nothing for ourselves from Hesse, and that if we march in we should only stay there until the Constitution of 1831 was restored, and a generally recognized legal condition established.

“The ‘*Journal des Débats*’ asserts that the Austrian troops and ours, if I am not mistaken, had done away with this same Constitution in 1851 which we were going to introduce now by force of arms. This is a great confusion of facts. We were opposed to Austria and the Ba-

varians, and were then, as we are now, in favour of the Constitution of 1831, and those of 1852 and 1860 were imposed without force of arms."

King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

"BERLIN, May 17th, 1862.

"The passage about Cassel, in the speech at the opening of the Chamber, must include the intimation that our measures are not intended to abet any revolutionary movement.

"WILHELM."

Count Bernstorff to King Wilhelm.

"BERLIN, May 26th, 1862.

"Your Majesty,

"I must respectfully announce that it will not be possible to attend your Majesty to-morrow. The rheumatic pains* in my head and face caused by overwork and a violent cold are less, but they increase when I enter into conversation or attend to business, and I shall therefore require a few days' rest, lest I get a relapse.

"Meantime, the Hesse affair has entered on a phase in which it seems right to wait and see what the Elector will do, whether he will dismiss his Cabinet or not. If he does not, we shall soon have to take action, and we must not, therefore, alter anything in the preliminary disposition of our troops, so that we may be prepared for any event.¹ In the meantime I consider it practical to state at Vienna our expectant but unsatisfied attitude, so that there are no illusions about the situation, and our intention to demand satisfaction.

"If your Majesty, as I can scarcely doubt, agrees with

¹ Marginal note by the King. "Agree entirely."

this view, I respectfully beg to delay all further decision until I can personally report to your Majesty.¹

"Sybel's projected address, though containing many offensive things concerning internal affairs, says nothing objectionable about foreign affairs, so that it will require no great effort for me to combat it unless additions should still have to be made to it."²

"Herr von Bismarck leaves for Paris this evening. If Herr von Usedom's presence should be necessary for a time for the business negotiations of the affairs of Electoral Hesse, I will summon him as soon as I am well enough to talk to him about them, having already obtained your Majesty's permission to do so."³

Count Bernstorff to King Wilhelm.

"Your Majesty, "BERLIN, May 19th, 1862.

"Permit me to humbly beg your Majesty to sign the enclosed order. After mature deliberation, I have arrived at the conviction that only Herr von Sydow can undertake the representation now, as Count Eulenburg knows nothing of the business and would, therefore, have to get it up."⁴

"I have strongly dwelt upon our point of view at Vienna, and continually press the Austrian Cabinet to put an end to the Elector's procrastination, but I cannot agree to the pressure of the Cabinet that we should make fresh threats at this stage, and would rather think that the development of the crisis would be hindered by such methods.

¹ Marginal note by the King. "Agree entirely. But this should be announced at once at Vienna in the above sense."

² *Ibid.* "I am thinking of holding a Council on Friday, to settle the attitude of the Ministers at the debate on the Address."

³ *Ibid.* "Agreed."

⁴ *Ibid.* "Agreed."

The only right thing now is to wait and to be armed.¹ It is extremely painful to me to be tied to my room at this critical time, but I beg your Majesty to have patience for a few days, and I hope then to be able to attend on your Majesty.

“BERNSTORFF.”

King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

“BERLIN, May 30th, 1862.

“As twenty-four hours have again passed without hearing that the Elector has dismissed his Cabinet, the time has come to act upon my marginal note of yesterday, that is, to announce at Vienna at once,² that if the Ministry at Cassel is not dismissed in the shortest space of time (we will say by 1st June), Prussia will take her own satisfaction, and march.

“As this is the fourth day without the Elector having come to a decision, it is clear that he has been advised to drag on the matter, and to make a fool of Prussia. Send Abeken or Sydow to me with a telegram in the above sense, for Vienna, and let me have a copy of the urgent note, mentioned on the second page of your letter of yesterday.

“My patience is at an end, and it costs money to keep troops ready to march.

“WILHELM.”

¹ “I do it in the hope that you will not let him put a drag on, especially in the Hesse question, which according to the views expressed by him at an audience in your presence, might be his wish.” (Sydow, after Gruner's retirement, became Under Secretary of State, and shared his opinions.) Marginal note by the King.

² The King's marginal note. “An independent action on our part must constantly be kept definitely in view, and such threats I consider necessary. There cannot, of course, be any talk of disarming. Wilhelm. May 29th, 1862.”

*Count Bernstorff to Prince Reuss.*¹

"My dearest Prince, "BERLIN, May 31st, 1862.

"Although I am still ill, I will thank you for your letter of the 26th, and tell you that I am glad to give you the leave you ask for as soon as you desire it. It would be desirable that Herr von Bismarck should arrange to fetch his family before or after your leave, so that such an important post is not deserted. This would depend upon the length of leave you want, and it is best for you to talk the matter over with the Minister. Pray remember me to Herr von Bismarck, and tell him that I am not yet recovered, but feel relieved at Herr von Gruner's departure, who, if he had remained longer, would have driven me mad: he himself is near to being so. My energetic answer to Vienna in the manner of the commercial Treaty will not be displeasing in Paris.

"As the Progressives feel that they cannot reasonably blame our foreign policy, they will probably not mention it in the address.

"Farewell, my dearest Prince, and pray come and see us when on leave.

"Believe me, yours sincerely,

"BERNSTORFF."

Count Bernstorff to King Wilhelm.

(Accompanying State papers.)

"Your Majesty, "BERLIN, June 4th, 1862.

"I humbly send the enclosed:—

"1. Copy of a Memorial by Herr von Sydow concerning the conversation of yesterday with Count Chotek.²

¹ This letter may find a place here, because it throws a new light on Bernstorff's relations to Gruner.

² Marginal note by the King: "Answer quite correct."

"2. A copy of five telegrams, the last of which I sent to Vienna this morning by command of your Majesty, which reached me late last evening after the Foreign Office was closed.¹ It is impossible for a reply from Freiherr von Werther to arrive here before mid day, owing to the necessary time required to cipher and decipher it. I am still expecting it.

"In the meantime, will your Majesty most graciously notice by my telegram to Cassel, which I sent to the Elector yesterday afternoon, that I fixed the shortest possible respite, and that Councillor Rothert predicts a good result. I have not yet had an answer to a further telegram sent to-day, but shall not fail to lay it before your Majesty as soon as it comes.

"Finally, I beg your Majesty to consider favourably how my sense of heavy responsibility and feeling of duty obliges me to prefer the ungrateful rôle of cautious and slow progress to the quick and energetic action which corresponds with my personal inclination.²

"The more we exhaust all legal and peaceful means, the more justifiable will energetic action appear afterwards.³

"BERNSTORFF."

Count Bernstorff to King Wilhelm.

"Your Majesty,

"BERLIN, June 5th, 1862.

"I hereby send in this:—

"1. Freiherr von Werther's telegram.

"2. Also one from Councillor Rothert to Herr von Sydow.

¹ Marginal note by the King: "Everything quite right."

² *Ibid.*: "Quite understand; have, therefore, repeatedly postponed the given time."

³ *Ibid.*: "Right."

"3. I respectfully submit the telegram I intend to send to Councillor Rothert early to-morrow; the office at Cassel is closed this evening.

"I beg to say, in explanation of this correspondence, that the telegram yesterday was not from me to Councillor Rothert, but from Herr von Sydow, and, therefore, he replied to him. As Councillor Rothert is a personal friend of the Minister Abée, Herr von Sydow thought this the safest way that the warning could reach the Elector.

"Herr von Werther's despatches must arrive to-night.¹

"No answer has come from Paris.

"How Herr von Bigeleben can appeal to an alleged statement of Herr von Schleinitz concerning Herr von Baumbach,² I do not know. In any case, a Ministry of the latter would not be regarded as altogether satisfactory for us, even if he has now proposed moderate measures.

"BERNSTORFF."

Count Bernstorff to King Wilhelm.

(Enclosing two telegraphic answers to letters.)

"BERLIN, June 5th, 1862.

"Your Majesty,

"I respectfully forward two telegrams from Councillor Rothert to Herr von Sydow, with satisfactory news from Cassel, as well as an extract from his letter.³

"As soon as General von Lossberg shall have entered

¹ Marginal note by the King: "I am in Berlin, and therefore expect to hear up to ten o'clock."

² *Ibid.*: "Nor I."

³ *Ibid.*: "Does not this come from Vienna, though they officially deny the possibility of further pressure in Cassel?"

upon his duties, I shall let him know that we now expect satisfaction.¹

"P.S.—I have just received your Majesty's letter, and hasten, therefore, to forward the above. I confess that after General Lossberg's own official communication to Councillor Rothert, I had no longer thought of the possibility of a concentration of troops unless, indeed, there should be uncertainty in the formation of the Ministry at Cassel, and fresh pressure become necessary."²

Meanwhile, although the Elector of Hesse, in a great rage with his opponent, yielded, he still procrastinated in forming another Cabinet agreeable to Prussia and to his own country. Several orders from the King, as well as several interesting marginal notes on official documents, may find a place here.

King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

[Pencilled note.]

"BERLIN, June 5th, 1862.

"So there are signs of peace! It is a pity that the concentration orders had already been sent, for such a fact would have been effective, even if they had been revoked in twelve hours. I agree that we must await Lossberg's action before we disarm.

WILHELM."

King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

"BERLIN, June 24th, 1862.

"So the special Mission is conceded! How will the letter sound?³

¹ Marginal note by the King: "Quite right."

² *Ibid.*: "The concentration will be discontinued of course now, but we will not disarm!"

³ The letter of apology from the Elector of Hesse sent by General von Bardeleben.

"The question now is whether I shall receive General von Bardeleben in your presence or alone? The antecedents of Cassel are to be avoided, so it may be better that I receive him without you? Ought I to open and read the letter at once, or command the General to come an hour later, after I have read it *en attendant* with you? If the contents displease us, what then? Will you reply by letter, or dine here with Sydow at three, and, if so, both come at half-past two?"

"WILHELM."

Count Bernstorff to King Wilhelm.

"BERLIN, June 24th, 1862.

"In accordance with your Majesty's commands, I will come to dinner to-day and will be there with Herr von Sydow at half-past two in order to report. Should General von Bardeleben have arrived meanwhile, which I do not expect, and gone directly to the palace, I advise your Majesty to receive the Elector's letter from him, and then let the bearer wait in another room while your Majesty reads it, or command him to come an hour later, and then receive him if the letter is not displeasing.¹ The contents will probably agree with the enclosed telegram from Vienna. As we stated at Cassel that your Majesty would see in the dismissal of the Ministry the satisfaction for the reception of General von Willisen, your Majesty could not now desire more than a special Mission, which communicates in a suitable manner the measures the Elector has taken. The Mission itself shows that the Elector wishes to restore good relations with your Majesty.

"BERNSTORFF."

¹ Bardeleben only came to the palace on 25th June. He was induced first to lay a copy of the Elector's letter before Bernstorff.

Count Bernstorff to King Wilhelm.

"BERLIN, June 25th, 1862.

"Your Majesty,

"I humbly enclose a copy of the Elector's letter in pursuance of my telegram to-day. I think from the tenor of it I can advise your Majesty to receive General von Bardeleben alone, and to read the letter in his presence. It is not long. In this way the General's Mission will bear the character of a direct military Mission from Prince to Prince, as your Majesty desired General von Willisen's Mission to bear, and it will show that at such a Mission your Majesty can receive and read the letter without requiring official witnesses.¹

"After this is formally settled, your Majesty will think the time has come for the army to return to a peace footing.²

"BERNSTORFF."

King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

SCHLOSS BABELSBERG, July 9th, 1862.

". . . I was glad of your reply yesterday, although in the Hesse question I should have liked rather more pride at the success we have obtained.³

"WILHELM."

It was owing to the King and his Minister that Prussia thus obtained complete success in this affair, which, for a while, had assumed a dangerous aspect. They both exercised the greatest tact and diplomatic circumspection. The discussions on it lasted a long time, but the Elector's

¹ Marginal note by the King: "All this has taken place."

² *Ibid.*: "Has been ordered."

³ This refers to the opposition which Prussia had met with in Germany concerning the Hesse affair.

chief opposition was broken. The Chambers did not recognize the success, and continued to condemn the weakness of Prussian foreign policy.¹

Bernstorff entered upon a new path, and gained great distinction in the matter of the commercial relations between Prussia and other countries. Early in 1861 the commercial negotiations with France had commenced, and Austria had since then been putting spokes in the wheel with the object of defeating Prussia in this matter. There was much irritation at Vienna because Prussia had, the year before, refused Austria's demand to enter the Zollverein, but such a refusal had been necessary because the same reasons now existing against a union of the old Imperial state with the Zollverein were in force then. The economical conditions of the two countries are fundamentally different. Rechberg would not be convinced of the impossibility of Austria's entering the Zollverein, and asserted that the desire had been expressed by both countries for a customs' union in 1853. When he saw that Prussia was unyielding he tried to thwart the commercial treaty between Prussia and France, because, as officially stated, by France obtaining the most favoured nation clause, Austria would suffer. The whole negotiation threatened through these discussions at Berlin and Vienna to come to a standstill. Bernstorff was, however, determined to allow no difficulties to deter him: "Concerning the commercial treaty," he writes to Prince Reuss, on January 13th, 1862, "I do not give up the hope of carrying it

¹ In June Bismarck writes to Bernstorff from Paris: "The unpatriotic conduct of the Opposition in the Chamber and in the Press gives offence even here, and to the Emperor." *Bismarck Jahrbuch*, VI. 151. Bismarck to Bernstorff, Paris, June 28th, 1862. Bernstorff was proud of the success of the affair. When he was back in London, he writes to Bismarck, December 19th, 1862: "As to the Hesse question, I am glad to see that you carry on my policy, and I congratulate you on the success of your Mission."

through, if France will but give way on the cotton question, which is more important than the silk question.¹ In this hope, as I have just said to La Tour, we shall mention in the speech from the throne the pending negotiations which I would not do if it had not been done last year." The difficulties were so great then that Reuss, who was responsible for the affair, was almost in despair. He writes to Bernstorff in February:—

"The Emperor began to talk to me about the Commercial Treaty at a little ball at the Tuileries on January 27th, and said² he had had some important conversation with M. Thouvenel, and to his great regret he had learned that France could not go further than she had done. People said that the Prussian commissioners were averse to the treaty with France, and were altogether anti-French. To this must be ascribed the opposition and continued difficulties met with in Berlin.

"I wrote to your Excellency on November 22nd, that complaint was made here about Herr Philippsborn and Herr Delbrück, and Rouher said to me that he earnestly desired your Excellency would take up the matter yourself. I need not assure you that I vigorously protested against the Emperor's expressions, and, of course, threw all the blame on Rouher's obstinacy, besides pointing out to the Emperor that he must not forget the difficulties of our Government; it did not have such a free hand as France, but was continually obliged to take into consideration the crowd of small states. We had evinced our sincerity more than once, and had gone further, perhaps, than we could, etc. The Emperor promised at the end of our conversa-

¹ Bernstorff writes to Bismarck about the question of the Commercial Treaty: "It has given me much trouble here and there, but it will be a great work if it can be carried out." Bismarck Jahrbuch, VI. 118. Bernstorff to Bismarck, Berlin, January 8th, 1862.

² Reuss to Bernstorff. Paris, February 4th, 1862. Private letter.

tion to reconsider the subject; he himself wished it success, and hoped the negotiations would not be broken off. . . .¹

"Should they really be broken off, it might be well by some concession '*de mettre le gouvernement français dans son tort.*' The affair will be discussed in our Chambers, and thereby obtain publicity, so it might be of value to lay the blame on the right shoulders."

In his letter to Reuss on February 6th, 1862, Bernstorff went exhaustively into the matter :—²

"According to the latest French disclosures I still firmly hope to come to an understanding on the Commercial Treaty, and I am resolved to do all I can to bring the thing to an end. Having gone thus far, we cannot leave the matter unsettled, and I place a double value on coming to a good understanding with France, for Austria and her satellites do not hesitate to act aggressively towards us. It is quite unfounded that our commissioners are against the Treaty, or are anti-French, especially as regards Philippsborn. I will not say but that they are stiffer at times than is necessary, but that is only out of conscientiousness, and I modify where I can. Le Clerq is, on the contrary, very disagreeable, and is very rude at the sittings of the Conference, as I have heard repeatedly, thereby causing difficulties, while La Tour takes great trouble. The concessions about the outer ports and the fixed time, January 1st, 1866, are important. I urgently wish that in the tariff question, the latest demands are not France's last word. We shall have another sitting of the Conference soon, at which I shall be present with Von der Heydt and Patow."

¹ Reuss reported that Thouvenel had said to him that France was prepared to accept January 1st, 1866, as the date for the beginning of the commercial agreement, if the agreement were fixed for twelve years.

² Private letter.

At the beginning of March Bernstorff thought the victory as good as won: "That the Commercial Treaty," he writes to Reuss from Berlin on March 4th, 1862, "is assured greatly delights me, and I heartily thank you for your successful exertions." The Treaty was finished and announced in Berlin on March 29th. A large number of the German Governments at once declared themselves prepared to enter into it, including Saxony, anxiety about the industries overcoming their hatred of Prussia. Austria endeavoured at the last moment to prevent the conclusion, using the Conferences towards this end, to which invitation to the German states had been given, and at which Beust's proposed reforms were to be discussed. The Austrian Cabinet repeated its demand to enter the Customs Treaty, but as Rechberg was unsuccessful in this, he induced several states which had entered the Zollverein to withdraw from it.

Prussia had, at the last moment, made many concessions to the South German states, notwithstanding these Governments were opposed to the agreement between Prussia and France.¹ The blow against Prussia seemed all the more severe as at the Conference Austria's demands in matters of Federal reform for an assembly of delegates had been acceded to. But the Prussian Minister for Foreign Affairs would not yield. "Count Bernstorff," writes Sybel in his "Foundation of the German Empire," "repeated his protest against the decision of the majority, and declared the representative assemblies of Germany would reject with indignation this project. The nation demands a strong executive and a real representation of the country, but

¹ Bernstorff refers to this situation in a private letter to Bismarck on July 12th, 1862: "Two difficult questions, the Hesse and the Italian questions, have been conquered for the moment, but the Commercial Treaty is a burning one, as Austria leaves no stone unturned to hinder a settlement. We shall go our way with firmness and energy, and shall not shun any struggle in life or death." Bismarck Jahrbuch, vi., 155.

neither could be obtained in this way. On August 26th Prussia sent an answer to Bavaria and Württemberg, that if they definitely rejected the French agreement it would be deemed an expression of their desire not to continue in the Zollverein with Prussia. The Lower House approved this declaration on September 5th by 233 against 26."¹

Dangerous as the situation might appear, Bernstorff brought the Commercial Treaty through. The Prussian Chamber gave its consent. Shortly before the completion of the agreement, there were several discussions between the Prussians and the French about the number of orders which were to be bestowed on the negotiators. The affair at times assumed a somewhat humorous aspect.

"The announcement of the Commercial Treaty," writes Bernstorff to Reuss on April 1st, "brought La Tour to the question of orders, and he says that Thouvenel has asked for the Black Eagle for Rouher, and on my shrugging my shoulders doubtfully, he said Thouvenel had written to him most decidedly on the subject, and said that as Rouher had the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, he could not accept anything less than our highest order. They demand a Grand Cordon for Le Clerq and Herbet, and assert that as Ministers Plenipotentiary they have the rank of 'Generals of a division.' I have had a preliminary audience of the King about it, and His Majesty does not feel inclined to bestow the Black Eagle. On the other hand, although we cannot recognize a complete equality between this and the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, it is not to our interest at present to go against the French Government, and there is a certain justice in the demand that a statesman of a great Power who has the highest order of his own country should lay claim to the highest order of the foreign country.

¹ Sybel as cited above, vol. ii., 430.

I beg you, my dearest Prince, to consider the subject confidentially and considerably with Thouvenel, and let him know what La Tour has said to me, and tell him that it is quite unusual to bestow the Black Eagle on a foreign Minister who is neither President of Council nor Minister of Foreign Affairs for a great Power; that the idea was to give M. Rouher the Grand Cross of the Red Eagle, which the King highly esteems, and has not so far bestowed on any foreign Minister or Ambassador, and that none of our own Ministers possess it except myself. La Tour would receive it also on this occasion."

The Black Eagle which Rouher desired to obtain and the Orders for the French delegates occasioned a good deal of correspondence and negotiation. One feels with Bernstorff when he writes to Reuss how "tiresome" the affair was to him. The King gave in at last, rather than endanger the success of the Treaty, and met the wishes of the Frenchmen.

It was a matter of much trouble to gain the members of the Zollverein after the settlement of the Treaty, part of whom were egged on by Austria. "People here are very anxious," writes Reuss to Bernstorff on April 27th, "about the fate of the Commercial Treaty, as reports from South Germany do not predict anything favourable. The Cabinet in Vienna seems to be acting oddly, for while the official Press reviles the Treaty, Count Rechberg, when asked, has assured the Duke de Grammont that the Austrian Government is not averse to it. M. Thouvenel told me a few days ago that the Austrians have naively asked what France thought of doing if the other states in the Zollverein rejected the Treaty, or only accepted it conditionally. The latter case is thought impossible here, because they would never agree to such a thing."

Austria and the small states which intrigued in the

hope of Prussia being defeated, were obliged to retreat. All the Zollverein states finally accepted the agreement. "The German Commercial Diet," writes Maurenbrecher in his "Foundation of the German Empire,"¹ "which met at Munich, entirely approved of it. The Commercial Diet ever wished to form in the Zollverein a Federal Council and representation of the people which should decide all important questions. The Diet at Weimar announced much the same thing. All this afforded support to the Prussian policy in German questions, as one step had been taken in the direction of those voluntary agreements which Bernstorff had in his Note of December 20th, 1861, advocated as leading to a smaller union within the Federation."

King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

[Autograph letter.]

"SCHLOSS BABELSBERG, *August 3rd, 1862.*

"In recognition of your successful completion of the Commercial Treaty, which has been brought about by your energy, caution, and patience, I bestow upon you the Insignia of the Grand Cross of the Hohenzollern Order, set in brilliants.

"WILHELM."

The happy result of the Franco-Prussian Commercial Treaty extended far and near. It brought new life into the commercial relations between Germany and foreign countries, and even its opponents in the small states recognized the fact. All credit was given to Prussia, which in winning the victory had procured advantages for them. Bernstorff also brought the commercial treaties with

¹ Maurenbrecher as cited above, pp. 75 and 76.

China and Japan¹ to a successful issue, and it may rightly be deemed owing to his energy that a new era was founded in the Prusso-German commercial policy

¹ This provided new outlets for German commerce in the Far East.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN QUESTION—THE RELATIONS BETWEEN PRUSSIA AND RUS- SIA—THE RECOGNITION OF THE KINGDOM OF ITALY, 1862

The King, Bernstorff, and the Schleswig-Holstein question—Bernstorff and Reuss—Bernstorff's influence upon Lord Russell in favour of the Duchies—Preliminaries for the recognition of the Kingdom of Italy—Von der Goltz respecting members of the Russian Government—Correspondence between the King of Prussia and the Tsar.

BERNSTORFF'S whole heart was set on the liberations of the Elbe Duchies, all the more because of his own close connection with them. He had long been of King William's opinion that the foreign policy of Prussia could no longer suffer the encroachments and violation of justice by the Danes. In the two years preceding Bernstorff's entrance into the Ministry, the tension between Denmark and Germany had increased owing to the Danish policy of Lauenburg and Holstein. Even the prospect of a Federal execution decided on by the Diet in 1858 had not intimidated the Danish Government. There only seemed some willingness to give way when the Regent took up the Government of Prussia. In November the arbitrarily enforced Constitution for Holstein and Lauenburg was revoked, and the absolute royal power in all common affairs re-established in both Duchies. When the King of Denmark convened the nobles of Holstein

the following year to discuss their forming again a joint Constitution, they refused to enter upon the royal proposal. Schleswig seemed to be treated as an incorporated province of the kingdom, because it had been obliged to remain under the common Constitution and the Danish Council. The Holstein nobles wished to set aside this general Council of the Kingdom, and for the Chambers of the separate countries to have direct relations with the crown. The conferences between Denmark and Germany were endless, and the Danes employed this delay to hold closer than ever to Schleswig and to strengthen their military positions.

When Bernstorff became Secretary for Foreign Affairs, he was convinced that Schleswig should under no circumstances be sacrificed to Denmark. He had protested on December 5th, 1861, in a despatch to the Danish Cabinet against a separation of the Duchies, and demanded that Denmark should hold to the promise made in 1852. The position of Prussia towards this question was a difficult one, because, as already mentioned, the intrigues of all the Great Powers played about it, and made it well-nigh impossible to treat it objectively. France, especially, had her attention directed to every development, and hoped through it to be able to realize plans against Germany. Reuss announced repeatedly from Paris how Louis Napoleon made the dispute the subject of a thorough study. The Emperor occupied himself only with the *political* side of the question; he had neither interest nor patience to enter into the pros and cons of this "querelle d'Allemand." In conversation with Reuss, he returned to the idea of a complete separation between Schleswig and Holstein. "I replied," writes Reuss to Bernstorff on December 7th, 1861, "certainly, if Germany were to agree to Denmark's wish and to allow the complete separation of Schleswig from

Holstein and Lauenburg, the affair could be settled tomorrow. But Germany never could consent to the incorporation of Schleswig by Denmark. The whole of Germany takes much too lively an interest in the fate of the Germans in that Duchy to permit of any German Governments agreeing to the plans of Denmark. Denmark must faithfully fulfil the promises she has made, and respect German nationality in the Duchy." Bernstorff pointed out to Reuss that Louis Napoleon must be left in no doubt as to the firm attitude of Prussia.

On January 13th, 1862, Bernstorff writes to Reuss:—

"The Danish question might easily assume a serious aspect, and it is, of course, of tremendous moment to us to have full and reliable information as to the intentions of the French Government. La Tour read a sentence to me from a letter of Thouvenel's to the effect that it would be difficult not to revert to a European Conference if the German Powers persevered in dragging in the question of Schleswig, as Sweden had already applied to the Great Powers about the maintenance of the Treaty of London. I confined myself to saying that no one had tried so far to break that treaty, and that Sweden was playing a suspicious rôle, it seemed to me. This is decidedly the case, and Charles XV.¹ will evidently take the opportunity of a conflict between us and Denmark by a momentary intervention for Denmark, only to take possession of both Denmark and Schleswig afterwards, and then come to an understanding with us about the partition of the kingdom according to this *societas leonina*. It would be extremely

¹ Charles XV., King of Sweden and Norway, 1859-72, born at Stockholm in 1826, eldest son of Oscar I., was a zealous adherent of the Scandinavian idea, which was to unite the Scandinavian countries under his sceptre. He supported Denmark in her struggle with Germany by diplomatic efforts. He protested against the occupation of Schleswig in 1862, and mobilized his army, but without effectual result.

interesting to know if and how far the French Emperor encourages or incites such plans, or if he would ultimately support him. The islands, and if need be, Jutland, could be readily yielded to Sweden, but Schleswig never, and what would become of the Duchies if such plans as those of Louis Napoleon's really existed? Would he consent to our taking them without profit to himself? Where could he find this? These are questions, my dear Prince, which I do not wish to place before him or Thouvenel, but which I often think of myself, and I recommend to your consideration and research, whether any point of departure can be found which can supply an answer. . . ."

"Concerning the question of the Duchies," answered Reuss on January 15th, "your Excellency will see from my despatch that it is openly said here that they wish to please Prussia in this matter. This readiness to oblige only extends to the Eider. As soon as the question goes beyond that, the idea of a European Conference comes up, such as Thouvenel and La Tour d'Auvergne have written about. They do not desire to go into the legal rights of the Duchies, and avoid all discussion on the subject.

"There seems no manner of doubt that the Emperor is not opposed to the Scandinavian plans of Charles XV. Your Excellency will recall what I wrote from Compiègne at the beginning of December, in which I repeated what the Emperor had said on the subject. He told me then that if the Swedish plans were realized, the question of the Duchies would be solved most easily, if Sweden annexed all Denmark, and then there would be no difficulty in uniting Schleswig to Germany; but that such a solution must be delayed until there was a change of reign in Denmark, and then either a European Conference or the *événements* would settle the matter.

"The questions which connect with this plan I have

frequently considered, and after careful attention to the prevailing views here, I will endeavour to answer you.

"It does not seem probable that the Emperor will consent to the Duchies coming to us without profit to himself. I think that in this case the same thought prevails with him as I have already set forth in my remarks on the German question. A year ago Lord Cowley, who had negotiated with the present Government about the Duchies, said to me: 'Si vous songez à incorporer les duchés, à les prendre pour vous, alors vous ferez bien d'envoyer une forte armée sur le Rhin pour défendre votre frontière; car jamais l'Empereur ne restera un spectateur tranquille d'un agrandissement de la Prusse.' Various remarks from other persons who are in a position to know something of the Emperor's plans in this matter have but confirmed me in this opinion."

Reuss did not conceal from Bernstorff that the Prussian despatch of December 29th, 1861, still gave offence in Paris, because it was understood to be a revival of the "Radowitz programme." Louis Napoleon had, it is true, another point of view than that of the public. So Drouyn de Lhuys, who was in the Emperor's confidence, said to Reuss on February 8th, 1862:—¹

"The increase of the power of Prussia is of general interest in Europe, and France will not oppose it. Prussia," he continued, "is not strong enough to carry out her intended rôle alone; she must, therefore, cling to a stronger Power. In that case it would be an important counterpoise to the Colossus of the North and to Austria."

Bernstorff was able to inform Bismarck on February 21st² that: "France is obliging as to the Danish matter,

¹ Reuss to Bernstorff. Paris, February 9th, 1862. Private letter.

² Bismarck Jahrbuch, vi., p. 128. Bernstorff to Bismarck. Private letter. Berlin, February 21st, 1862.

and La Tour told me in confidence three days ago that they were not opposed to a division of Schleswig. We should gain much as to the possibility of settling this affair finally, if this assurance could be got from Russia and England. The English Cabinet, although it originated the idea of separation, declares against it now, however, simply because Denmark will not agree to it. One might retort that Germany will not agree to the Danish plans, and that this is of quite as much weight; that if Europe finds it reasonable and is ready to carry it out, Danish wishes will be of no account. If Russia were to be won, and we had two European Great Powers for us, I would either attempt a Conference, or let it come to war. We might do the latter if we had an understanding with France, but not without it."

Thouvenel, in a conversation with Reuss in March, returned to this plan. He said that France desired a European Conference, and regretted that Prussia would not agree to one. Louis Napoleon did not wish a Conference with previous conditions, but wished to take part perfectly unfettered. It was natural that Prussia should hesitate to accept such a proposal and to agree to a Congress which would meet with a definite guarantee.¹

¹ France had the *arrière-pensée* of obtaining the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg as a reward for her complaisance to Prussia concerning Schleswig-Holstein. Prince La Tour d'Auvergne, the French Minister at Berlin, writes to Thouvenel on April 1st, 1862, as follows:—

"The idea that we should lay claim to the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg as a set-off to our compliance to Prussia's acquiring a valuable increase of territory in the North of Germany is evidently well thought out, but it is hardly accurate to say it is possible. We must hold to this plan, in any case, and leave it to ripen. It would be dangerous to let our plan be known to people with such fine sentiments of national honour as are at present exhibited in Berlin. The only person I know to whom one could venture to make such proposals is M. de Bismarck."

This letter was afterwards found among Rouher's papers, in 1871, and

Count Bernstorff to Prince Heinrich VII. of Reuss.

[Private letter.]

"BERLIN, *April 1st*, 1862.

"My dearest Prince,

"You will receive a despatch to-day about the Danish question, which is so worded that you may read it to M. Thouvenel, without saying that you are empowered to do so, but I beg you not to let him have a copy of it.

"Prince de La Tour d'Auvergne read a French memoir of the Danish Government to me, which goes to prove that we have nothing to do with Schleswig, and among other historic lies, says that the union between Schleswig and Holstein began in 1834. As the Danes declare that the Diet sanctioned the agreement of 1852 in reference to Holstein and Lauenburg only, and took no count of Schleswig, I had a French translation made of an excellent memorial by Count Schlieffen written in 1860, which demonstrates the worthlessness of this assertion. It was sent to Count Pourtalès in a private letter by Herr von Gruner, together with an unsatisfactory French transla-

Bismarck sent it to Bernstorff in London, with the following official letter of November 14th of that year :—

"In connection with the publication in the 'Reichsanzeiger,' which caused the impression in England about which your Excellency reports on the 29th, I send a copy of a letter of the French Minister to Prince La Tour d'Auvergne, dated April 1st, 1862. It proves that long before the events of 1866 had altered the territorial status of Prussia, and had set aside the Federal Constitution, the French Government had taken up the idea of acquiring the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg for France. Your Excellency will please to show the letter to Lord Granville in confidence, calling his attention to the date, and, if he should desire it, let him have a copy of it. The letter is written by Prince La Tour himself. Will your Excellency particularly draw attention to the importance an extension of French territory up the northern end of Luxemburg would have had for Belgium?

"BISMARCK."

tion, but I do not know whether he made use of it. In any case, it is well for such things to be said as often as possible, and for one to have the last word. Baron Carl von Plessen, the very clever president of the last Assembly of the Holstein nobles, will introduce himself to you in Paris, and I beg you to receive him kindly. I have not now seen him, but I have known of him for more than thirty years, and have been asked to recommend him to you.

“All sorts of projects crop up; the Hanoverian, Count von Platen, has sent a memorial in to London through Count Kielmannsegge, at the request of Lord Russell, which he demands, besides a general representation of the people according to the population, a Chamber in which the countries as such are to be elected. Utterly unacceptable! Baron Blome-Heiligenstetten, who is detained here by illness, has another project: the division of the administration of Schleswig, and a general representation of all parts of the kingdom. Also unacceptable. We must and shall remain where we were in 1852, and demand the entire fulfilment of Denmark's obligations. Only if they declare that they will not or cannot, we must try another basis, and the most reasonable and acceptable one in our opinion: the division of Schleswig and the merely personal union between the German and Danish halves of the kingdom. We will not, therefore, push our views at present, but if a Conference is forced upon us, we must put our basis as a ‘*conditio sine qua non*,’ but for the present we wish it understood that we can and will carry out our demands on Denmark ourselves, and alone. I mention this because La Tour said to me a few days ago that Thouvenel writes privately to him: ‘*Reuss devient pressant*.’ Not that I in the least believe that you have gone too far! But I tell you simply because the other Powers wish, of course, to give them-

selves the appearance of doing us a favour and concede to our urgency if they eventually accept an expedient, such as the division of Schleswig. You cannot too emphatically refuse the suggestion of a secession of Holstein from the German Federation. We would not agree to such a discreditable idea, even to avoid war with all Europe. When Baron Blome rejected the insinuations of the Danish Commissioner on this point, and demanded the approbation of the Assembly, they rose as one man in enthusiastic agreement! How badly Thouvenel must be informed, if he really believes what he says."

Meanwhile, the Danes obtained an adjournment of the Federal executive procedure, but broke their word, that in regard to the contribution of Holstein to the joint Budget they would be satisfied with the items of the normal Budget. Bernstorff's Circular Despatch of June 27th protested against the fact that the quota was taken by the Danish Government for its greater needs out of the reserve fund of Holstein.

The international negotiations began again, which were to set in order the confusion of the Schleswig-Holstein question by European agreement. "The Emperor will meet us as far as he can," writes Bismarck to Bernstorff, "that is, he will further the division of Schleswig if we desire it, and will probably get Russia to do the same, but hardly so far as to England and Austria, and he will not quarrel with England about it. Before we have got strong enough at sea to cope with Denmark, we should not waste any words on the matter. But with three or four ironclads, we would be in a position to settle the matter."¹

¹ Bismarck Jahrbuch, vi., p. 147. Bismarck to Bernstorff. Paris, June 16th, 1862. Private letter. Bismarck writes:—"Bismarck to Bernstorff. Paris, July 15th, 1862. The division of Schleswig would be agreed to unconditionally if the question were brought forward at a Conference or through other events arising."

Bismarck announced at Berlin that Louis Napoleon had made a proposal on June 28th of "an alliance—a diplomatic alliance"—in which they would learn to have mutual confidence, and to count upon one another in difficulty. But the Emperor gave Bismarck to understand, at the same time, that Austria had made important offers to him, owing to his anxiety about an *entente* between Prussia, Russia, and France. The appointments of both Bismarck and Budberg played a part in this matter. Bismarck had no doubt of Russia's good-will, and that of France, as he sarcastically observed, "to secure their intimacy with Austria in regard to future events." "Gortschakoff," he continued, "works for the dissolution of the alliance of the Western Powers, and Austria will readily sacrifice the left bank of the Rhine if she obtains on the right bank a Federal Constitution with an assurance of the preponderance of her influence."¹ This much is certain, that Louis Napoleon's consent regarding Schleswig was not to be trusted. He would agree to the Prussian point of view about the Elbe Duchies, only in consideration of compensation. Prussia constantly incurred the danger of being outbid by the other Powers. The Congress, which the Emperor supported for the solution of the Schleswig-Holstein perplexity was only to give France the welcome opportunity of again entering the field of foreign politics to seize some prize.

Under these conditions Bernstorff was obliged to see that the idea of an active, energetic action in this question was not to be entertained. He tried, however, to make some arrangement by which the rights of Schleswig-Holstein within the Danish monarchy should be secured.

Bernstorff had endeavoured, when he was in London,

¹ Bismarck Jahrbuch, vi., 153. Bismarck to Bernstorff. Paris, June 28th, 1862.

to explain the rights of Schleswig-Holstein to Lord John Russell, whose humane mind he knew. He continued to make these efforts when he became Minister for Foreign Affairs. In a long and exhaustive conversation with Lord Augustus Loftus, he explained his ideas and plans.¹ Loftus made a note of this conversation—he treated it merely as a private matter—and sent it to Lord Russell. The memorandum was based on the project which Lord Russell sent to Mr. William Lowther, *Chargé d’Affaires* during Lord Augustus Loftus’s absence. Lord Russell desired the complete autonomy of Schleswig, and its self government in internal affairs, and also the establishment of a normal Budget by four Parliaments—Holstein, Schleswig, Lauenburg, and Denmark, every ten years. The contributions to this Budget were to be voted yearly by each of the Chambers according to their quota. These proposals were virtually due to Bernstorff’s instigation.

A full understanding was arrived at, as a despatch from Mr. William Lowther confirms, which is found among Bernstorff’s papers.² It is too comprehensive and prolix to be reproduced here. As the result of this conversation, Bernstorff stated that they wished that the different parts of the Danish kingdom—Holstein, Lauenburg, Schleswig, and Denmark proper—should all have equal rights. No law or measure for all would, therefore, pass without having been sanctioned by each one of these countries. Only the complete equality of the four states, or factors, as he called them, could form a basis for permanent under-

¹ “Reminiscences of a Diplomatist,” by Lord Augustus Loftus.

² Substance of observations by Count Bernstorff on proposals contained in Earl Russell’s private letter of August, 1862, for an arrangement of the Danish Duchies question. Despatch from William Lowther to Lord Russell, September 15th, 1862. Lowther concluded by remarking that a full understanding between Russell’s and Bernstorff’s views had been obtained, Bernstorff’s ideas were in entire agreement with those of Russell.

standing with Germany. In the course of further conversation, Bernstorff said that the preponderating element in Schleswig was German, and that Denmark had not succeeded in artificially producing a preponderating Danish element. He declared throughout that he was convinced of the firm and inseparable connection between Holstein, Lauenburg, and Schleswig, founded on the common language, descent and tradition. Thereupon he suggested the idea that the wisest and easiest way out of the present difficulty would be by two representations of the people, or factors, instead of four, as administration of the Kingdom of Denmark. In the one, Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenburg could be put together. He entered a protest against the encroachment of the Danish senate, by which a "de facto incorporation" of Schleswig had been enacted, whereby, as he said, the obligations undertaken by the King of Denmark towards Germany had been gravely violated. Bernstorff would never agree to sanction such a state of things, for it was just here that the essential difference lay between Denmark and Germany. The German people wished the complete autonomy of Schleswig in the same way as obtained in Holstein and Lauenberg, and in Denmark itself. The autonomy could never be regarded as fulfilling the real wishes of Germany, and it was not, therefore, perfectly satisfactory, as long as Schleswig was represented in the Danish Assembly.¹

The English Note of September 24th was chiefly the result of this conversation. The draft of the Holstein

¹ Bernstorff mentions this later in a conversation with Theodor von Bernhardt, on December 30th, 1863. Bernhardt writes: "He it was," so says Bernstorff, "who, when he was Minister, brought on the discussion about Schleswig, after they had kept saying for ten years that Schleswig did not concern us at all, that we had nothing to say about it. He (Bernstorff) had constantly taken the initiative in this matter, and in bringing it forward, so that Prussia had become the leading spirit in the action."

Assembly of 1859 was also reverted to. Russia, Austria, and Prussia supported the British propositions, which, however, were most rudely declined by Denmark on November 6th. They turned a deaf ear to all further exhortations from England, and the international negotiations had to be discontinued.

No one regretted this more than Bernstorff. He could, however, say with pride that he had entered most eagerly into the question of the German kindred races. Unfortunately, his short continuance in office prevented his views regarding Schleswig-Holstein from being carried out. He consoled himself with the thought that the time must come when Prussia would be forced by the obstinacy of Danish resistance to take up arms. The situation in Europe was unfavourable then. His wishes were realized two years later. He and his family rejoiced on receiving the news of Bismarck's success in winning the co-operation of Austria as to energetic measures against Denmark. Unable to attain success when he was Minister for Foreign Affairs he now, in some degree, shared it, as the representative of Prussia, at the London Conference. He considered that day as one of the greatest of his life, on which the English statesmen owed to him that the Prussian delegates had left the Conference as "masters of the situation."

With Prussia's eastern neighbour Bernstorff endeavoured to preserve the good old relations as far as possible, or to renew them. He had had bitter experience of Russian diplomacy in the course of his life, but he overlooked this when the interests of Prussia made it advisable. He had to be cautious in the conduct of affairs with Russia, whose foreign affairs were in the hands of Prince Gortschakoff, as Prussian influence in St. Petersburg had become weak for some years. Bismarck did not conceal this fact when

he was Prussian Minister there.¹ "The long political understanding between Prussia and Russia," he writes privately to Bernstorff on November 25th, 1861, "was but a doubtful advantage to us; the intimate connection between the two Courts still has a hold on the Tsar personally, though a position such as that of General Rauch and Count Münster towards the Tsar Nicholas would not now be possible. The other members of the Imperial family, the Grand Duke Constantine, the Prince of Oldenburg, and the Duke of Mecklenburg, are hostile towards us; the first from a Russian standpoint, and the other two, from that of the German Middle States; the remainder of the Grand Dukes have no political interests. Other politicians are not ill-disposed towards us, but cool, for we do not impress them by any brilliancy of exterior circumstance, and they are indifferent as to what goes on with us. A sort of grateful feeling for our conduct during the war in the East, and hatred of Austria, makes them fairly tolerant of us. But, on the whole, the estrangement, or rather the complete forgetfulness of Prussia, is on the increase. They reproach us by saying it is the same on our side."

Notwithstanding this, Bismarck, in agreement with Bernstorff, earnestly tried to improve these relations. In regard to the Polish question Bismarck advised agreement with Russia, and that no notice should be taken of the sympathy for the Poles shown by German Liberals. "Every success for the Polish national movement," he writes to Bernstorff, "is a defeat for Prussia, and we cannot fight against this element by simple justice, but only according

¹ I have the following reasons for reprinting some of Bismarck's letters, although they have already been published (*Bismarck Jahrbuch*, vi., 105-194), for they are an integral part of Bernstorff's papers, and by premature publication are torn from their context.

to the rules of war. The Polish question cannot be judged impartially by us, but only with hostility. . . . Between us and any attempt to restore the Poles, peace is impossible. . . . Gortschakoff already says that we desire Russia to suppress the Polish national movement by force, while we are only anxious to preserve our Liberal reputation."

Bernstorff declared his entire agreement with Bismarck's views about the Poles. "I am quite of your opinion," he writes on December 7th, "that between us and any attempt to restore the Poles peace is not possible. We must let all our actions concerning the Poles be based on this."¹ Bernstorff, therefore, took no part in regard to them which could be interpreted at St. Petersburg as hostile. The relations between the two countries improved until Bismarck's recall. Then, much to Prince Gortschakoff's² annoyance, they became less satisfactory for a time. Bernstorff was not responsible for this step, which was taken at the express desire of King Wilhelm.³

From the despatches of Count von der Goltz, Prussian Minister at St. Petersburg, it will be seen how great an impression Bismarck's recall had made. Various events in the Balkans increased the irritation, and Prince Gortschakoff took his revenge in regard to the question of Middle European policy, then agitating public opinion in Germany, namely, the recognition of the Kingdom of Italy. The question came up while Bismarck was in St. Petersburg. There was great diversity of opinion in Prussia, and states-

¹ Bismarck Jahrbuch, vi., p. 116. Bernstorff to Bismarck. Berlin, December 7th, 1861. Private letter.

² Prince Alexander Gortschakoff, b. 1798, d. 1883, distinguished Russian statesman and diplomatist.—Tr.

³ The recall was not, of course, a surprise to the initiated. Informed politicians, as is evident from Bismarck's letters to his wife, had spoken of it long before. His entrance into the Ministry had been repeatedly thought of.

men were forced to take a definite stand concerning young Italy. The extreme Right looked upon the new Italy as the outcome of revolution, and that it ought to be crushed, while the Radicals were passionately in favour of its recognition. The moderate parties, on the contrary, thought that it was not a question to fight for, nor was it supporting a revolution as Austria put it, but rather a matter for the Italian people, who had, like any other great nation, a right to unity and independence. Thus public opinion raged throughout Prussia and Germany. Prussia had, until now, taken the side of Austria in this question, but owing to Bernstorff, the tide had turned. He appeared in this question as the realistic politician who was not to be led in his political actions either by inclination or disinclination. He had, indeed, to give up the political views of the past. He had grown up with the idea that Austria had a right to predominance in Italy, that the situation in Europe made the dismemberment of Italy a necessity. His close relations to the Court of Naples are also known. But all this could not hinder his impartial judgment of the changes in Italy, and he also hoped to attain other objects by this recognition. The guiding thought uppermost in his mind was that Prussia could use it as a weapon against Austria, especially against the opposition of Austria in regard to the reform of the Federation. "I do not know," he writes to Bismarck on January 8th, 1862, "whether the recognition of Italy would not be the best answer. The King is still deterred, first by the question of real consolidation, which is decisively answered from Turin in the affirmative, but is doubted in other quarters; secondly, the question of Rome and Venice. I confess, that the first is not only a matter of indifference to me, but that I wish the French to leave the Pope to his fate, the sooner the better. Venice, to be sure, is a more difficult question, as, in regard to it, we are

bound in many ways. In any case, I should like to be able to use these arms against Austria as a 'compelle' on the German question."¹

He felt at one with Bismarck in this matter, and the latter answered from St. Petersburg: "My conviction is that we ought to invent the Kingdom of Italy, if it did not arise of itself. . . . When once it stands on its own feet, I cannot think of a more welcome creation for Prussian policy." The affair had progressed further in February. "If the Cabinet of Turin gives us," writes Bernstorff, "certain guarantees which we require, we shall soon decide upon recognition. England and France are urging it. . . . Whether, after what Prince Gortschakoff has said to you, it is desirable to make a previous communication to the Russian Cabinet, I do not know. Perhaps it would not be bad if you were to prepare it without saying anything about instructions, but only speak as from your own knowledge, and say that a recognition was likely to take place soon. If you find that there is any inclination or probability of going with us, you might try to work privately in this direction; should there be any real hope of Russia's adherence we would, of course, before we took a decisive step, invite Russia to join us."²

Gortschakoff seems to have been influenced by Austria in his distrust of Prussia. He had constantly felt animosity against Prussia; it was his political creed to make her a vassal of Russia, and not to allow her to play a leading part in foreign politics. His dissatisfaction increased when

¹ Bismarck Jahrbuch, vi., p. 118. Bernstorff to Bismarck. Berlin, December 8th, 1862. Private letter.

Ibid. Bismarck to Bernstorff. St. Petersburg, January 15th, 1862.

² *Ibid.*, vi., p. 128. Berlin, February 21st, 1862. Bismarck's reply, p. 130, St. Petersburg, February 27th, 1862. "The recognition of Italy by Russia is so far ripe that probably if we shake the tree the apple will fall." The same, p. 147. Bismarck to Bernstorff. Paris, June 16th, 1862.

Bismarck was recalled, and he resolved to use the question of the recognition of Italy to take the Cabinet of Berlin in tow, and to prove to the world its dependence upon Russia. Bismarck informed Bernstorff on June 16th, from Paris, of Russia's single-handed negotiations with Italy, Prince Gortschakoff having demanded, as the price of Russian recognition of Italy, her renunciation of Venice.¹ But he did not go on with this negotiation and turned again to Berlin. He particularly wished to prevent Prussia's getting the start of Russia in recognizing Italy, so he tried to tie the hands of the Prussian Government by an agreement. There seems to have been one between Prussia and Russia with the object of recognizing Italy at the same time.²

Before this affair is gone into any further, some extracts from Count Goltz's private letters will be subjoined, which touch upon Gortschakoff's irritation at Bismarck's recall. Goltz recommended Bernstorff to exercise great caution in dealing with the Russian statesman, so far as was compatible with the interests of Prussia; as, for example, in the Montenegro affair.³ In the war thus raging

¹ Bismarck to Bernstorff, Paris, June 16th, 1862. Bismarck Jahrbuch, vi., p. 147.

² This is also Lord Augustus Loftus's view. "Reminiscences of a Diplomatist."

³ Count von der Goltz to Count Bernstorff. St. Petersburg, May 7th, 1862. "Prince Gortschakoff is somewhat 'irritated' at the reception of his proposals about the Montenegro affair. The Russian Cabinet lay weight on 'the success' of obtaining something, however little, for the Slavs. Such a triumph is doubly harmless in a district such as Montenegro, where Russia can exercise no material influence, and the desired concessions cannot be profitable to us. It is, therefore, more in accordance with European interests that this Power obtains greater moral influence than France. It is an occasion to do the Russian Cabinet a service which costs us nothing." War raged then between the Porte and Prince Nicholas I., who, after Danilo's murder, had seized the reins of government. The Turkish Generals Omer Pasha and Dervish Pasha pressed forward victoriously. Peace was restored at last by international efforts on the *status quo*.

between the Porte and Montenegro, the Great Powers were trying to intervene. Russia and France were in sympathy with the latter country, while England and Austria were on the side of the Porte. Bernstorff, who had been invited by Russia to take sides with Montenegro, tried to take a middle course, to the annoyance, however, of Russia.

"That my beginning here," writes Goltz to Bernstorff, "should not be altogether of an unfriendly sort is all the more desirable for me, as, notwithstanding the excellent and amiable reception which I have had from the Tsar and Tsarina, and the Grand Dukes, including Constantine and Gortschakoff, I could not help seeing how unpleasantly Bismarck's recall has affected them. They conclude from it, and the Tsarina even said so to Bismarck, that our Government makes a difference as to importance between the various great posts, which is unfavourable to Russia, especially, as Bismarck openly owned, as he also wrote to me, his reluctance to exchange his post here for any other. It is unquestionable for every unbiased person that the post here, the Oriental question excepted, which is chiefly settled at Constantinople, is for the time being, politically dead, and demands less initiative than that of Paris and London. It is, therefore, natural to transfer one possessing this characteristic in a high measure to one of those posts, especially to the former. But it is in human nature that the Russian Court does not see its position in this light, and does not consider that its really friendly feelings are reciprocated. I know as well as anyone that this is not a right conception; but neither Bismarck nor I are in the position to explain the different motives of this *revirement*, which we ourselves ignore, in part, at least. But for this reason I should be doubly grateful to your Excellency if we could go on in this line, which has

begun to reconcile the Russian Cabinet to Bismarck's recall."¹

Count von der Goltz to Count Bernstorff.

[Private letter.]

"ST. PETERSBURG, *June 2nd*, 1862.

"While thanking your Excellency for your kind private letter of the 27th, let me explain an evident misunderstanding, by stating the fact that no one here has claimed that a Minister may not be exchanged from this place to another. But influential persons, among them the Tsarina, have told me (and Bismarck repeatedly confirmed it), that the circumstance had given offence, and that the latter had been recalled without his destination having been mentioned. Under the circumstances, the conclusion drawn was that this post stood less high than others. To remove this impression, Bismarck and I agreed to say that he was sent to London. He regretted leaving here, and this he said not merely from courtesy, for he has told me the same thing, though possibly he was influenced by the universal regret at his exchange."

Goltz alludes to Gortschakoff's behaviour, who, as he says, uses this temporary annoyance to fish in troubled waters. He continues :—"Gortschakoff expressed his regret about the affair of Electoral Hesse, and that for so small an object we had displayed so much strength. I need not say how I replied to this slighting remark. But it seems to me to be beyond doubt that the Russian Vice-Chancellor does not think that we do anything for which he must give

¹ It could not, of course, be said at St. Petersburg that Bismarck's recall was connected with the idea of his becoming Minister for Foreign Affairs. At the last moment the King could not overcome his objection to him personally, and would not allow Bernstorff to go. Hence Bismarck's appointment to Paris.

us an equivalent, and he, therefore, returns to his favourite idea of an understanding with France, which he has never, indeed, given up. It does not suit his views for Budberg to be sent there as Ambassador, for he is jealous of him; he rather wishes to reserve this post for himself, and tries to retain Kisseleff, incapable as he is, as long as possible. Why then does he send Budberg to Paris? As he said to Thun, he has written to Kisseleff that the Tsar did not wish him to take the journey to St. Petersburg on account of his age, so he sent Budberg to him as a '*dictionnaire vivant; feuillotez-y et vous trouverez l'expression de nos idées.*' What sort of questions are they? I fear it is about a compensation between the respective Italian and Oriental interests. Gortschakoff says to himself that our recognition depends upon the parliamentary situation, and that then Russia will hardly have time left to enter independently into action; in any case, it will receive no equivalent. If, however, Budberg is able to lay some definite plan with Louis Napoleon before the Tsar which suggests some equivalent in the East, the antipathy against the Emperor of the French, and the personal desire of his Majesty to co-operate with Prussia, will be easier to overcome. This is a mere conjecture of mine, for which I have no positive reasons, especially as Gortschakoff avoids discussing the Italian question with me. But it seems to me important to keep such an eventuality in view, for we should be quite isolated if an understanding were come to between France and Russia without our co-operation."

Gortschakoff's negotiations with the Emperor Napoleon were conducted in the spirit described by Goltz, to induce the Emperor to recognize the kingdom of Italy, pledging himself to persuade Prussia to join them in the recognition, as if this were a matter of course. The reasons for Bernstorff's original hesitation in this matter, the settlement of

which was eagerly desired throughout North Germany, have already been mentioned. Advocate as he was of the principle of legitimacy, this consideration did not weigh with him now. He no longer doubted that the interest of the state came before all other interests. He frankly explained his views to Lord Augustus Loftus concerning the recognition of Italy.¹ He agreed that it would be an advantage to Prussia and entered into the difficulties which confronted him through the legitimist views of King Wilhelm and the relations with Austria; besides which, the fortified quadrilateral of northern Italy was considered as a protection to that part of Germany. If, however, the Roman and Venetian questions could be peaceably settled, there would be no further difficulty about the recognition. He hinted that the time would then have come to separate Italy and France.

In the meantime, the demand for the recognition of the Kingdom of Italy became stronger in Prussia. The Landtag, that is, the Liberal majority, demanded it, while the Right violently opposed it, the recognition of the Kingdom of Italy being regarded by them as revolutionary. Russia now approached Prussia concerning the recognition, and pressure was brought to bear on her from St. Petersburg. The monstrous demand was made to Prussia to come to an instantaneous decision. Bernstorff had, however, already

¹ Loftus's "Reminiscences of a Diplomatist." "Quant à la question de la légitimité, il y a longtemps que j'en fait mon deuil. Il ne s'agit maintenant que de prendre en considération les intérêts du pays."

Bismarck writes:—"The French Press conjectures that the recognition of Italy is part of a common understanding between France and Italy. I share this view to a certain extent, and think that Russia has made the desired concessions to Italy and Poland, and for that, has obtained the security that France will, at least, help her to prevent all aggravation of the situation of the Græco-Slav elements in Montenegro, Servia, and Herzegovina."

Bismarck Jahrbuch, ii., 157. Bismarck to Bernstorff. Paris, July 15th, 1862. Private letter.

been informed by Goltz¹ that Gortschakoff had communicated to the Cabinet of Turin through the French Government that he would, under definite assurances, recognize the Kingdom of Italy, and enter into diplomatic relations with the Cabinet of King Victor Emanuel. This was in spite of the existing agreement and without previous understanding with Prussia. The manner in which Russia asked for Prussia's co-operation showed Gortschakoff's arrogance. A Russian Messenger, it was said, would leave St. Petersburg in a few days with instructions respecting this matter, *en route* for Turin. He would be obliged to stop for twenty-four hours in Berlin, and, meanwhile, the Prussian Government could give their consent to the recognition of the Kingdom of Italy, so that both Governments might act simultaneously.

Bernstorff was not disposed to permit Prussia to be thus taken in tow by Russia. He did not intend that Prussia should appear as the satellite of the Tsar's empire, especially in a question initiated by France, and about which the latter had conferred only with Russian statesmen. As the Russian Messenger would not reach Berlin for some days, Bernstorff determined to go forward alone. With the King's consent, he sent a despatch to the Prussian Minister in Turin, in which he stated again the reasons which had been against the recognition of the Kingdom of Italy, among which were the peculiar relations of the German Federation and the feeling of a great part of the German Roman Catholics. Notwithstanding these considerations, however, he writes that the Prussian Cabinet had decided to agree to the recognition, as the Government of Turin had given the assurance that Italy wished to carry on a peaceful policy at home and abroad, and, as the settlement about Rome

¹ Colonel Freiherr von Loën, Prussian military secretary at St. Petersburg, telegraphed to this effect on June 30th.

and Venice was to be left to future peaceful consideration, the King of Prussia had decided on recognition if the Government of Victor Emanuel would renew these assurances officially. The despatch was addressed to Count Brassier de St. Simon, Prussian Minister to the Court of Turin, and sent before the arrival of the Russian Messenger. Thus Prussia's recognition of Italy was sent in advance of that of Russia. The answer from the Italian Government arrived in Berlin on July 16th, and met with the King's full approval. The Italian Minister, Count Launay, presented a letter from Victor Emanuel to the King, in which he announced that he had taken the title of King of Italy in consequence of the vote of the Italian people through their representatives.

The extreme Right were greatly irritated at the news of the recognition of the King of Sardinia, and endeavoured to have the decision cancelled. Bernstorff firmly declared that it was too late to turn back. It was a fine trait of his character that he warmly took up the cause of the family of the ex-King of Naples, and strongly advocated the restoration of their private property by the Italian Government. He mentioned that the motive for this was the long connection between the Court of Naples with that of Prussia. To the excuse made by the Turin Cabinet, that it could not give into the hands of the enemy weapons which might indirectly lead to an attack upon Italy, Bernstorff rightly replied that there need only be attached to the surrender of the private fortune of the King of Naples the condition that he renounced all royal rights upon the kingdom.

The following papers concerning the recognition of Italy are among those left by Bernstorff:—

King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

"BABELSBERG, June 15th, 1862.

"I have instructed Brassier to say at his farewell audience nothing further in Turin than: As Naples seems to be getting pacified, and the Government evinces good will in repudiating the Garibaldian excesses, Prussia is beginning to consider the recognition of the Kingdom of Italy, but that Brassier had no orders to do more. He ought not, I think, to announce in Turin that we intend to act with Russia. I beg you to read this passage again to Brassier, so that he may be quite sure of my meaning.

"WILHELM."

King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

"BABELSBERG, June 30th, 1862.

"Colonel von Loën has just telegraphed to me that Russia will recognize Italy the day after to-morrow, asking if Prussia will also do so? As we do not yet possess any official announcement about the conditions under which recognition is to take place, all haste on our side is to be avoided.

"WILHELM."

Count Bernstorff to King Wilhelm.

"July 1st, 1862.

"After its last promises, it appears to me quite incredible that Russia means to recognize Italy to-morrow, as Colonel von Loën has telegraphed.

"BERNSTORFF."

Count Bernstorff to King Wilhelm.

"BERLIN, July 1st, 1862.

"Your Majesty will see from the enclosed telegram from Count Goltz, the unreasonableness of the demand

made upon us. We neither know the Russian conditions nor the Sardinian reply, and we are in twenty-four hours to consider whether we will go with them, and to prepare our despatches. I have telegraphed that we could decide nothing before we had seen the correspondence.¹

“BERNSTORFF.”

King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

“BABELSBERG, July 4th, 1862.

“I wish to see the note for Brassier in its definite form before you send it off.

“WILHELM.”

King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

“SCHLOSS BABELSBERG, July 6th, 1862.

“As I have just now opened your letter of to-day concerning Richthofen’s communication, and found the telegram from St. Petersburg, it made me read your letter of July 5th, in which you ask me to read the despatches sent to Turin, and I see, to my no small fright, that they have gone without my having, as I intended, heard the Cabinet on this important question. As the Tsar now writes to me himself, to state his view of the Italian question, I greatly wish not to show such *immense empressement* to recognize Italy, particularly before I receive the Tsar Alexander’s letter. But as the despatches have gone to Brassier, you gain your point, that we should act independently of Russia, which is only apparently the case, and I beg you to telegraph to Brassier immediately that he is to make no use of the despatches until the 4th.

“WILHELM.”

¹ Marginal note by the King: “Entirely agree.” July 1st, 1862,

*Extract from a letter from King Wilhelm to Count
Bernstorff.*

"SCHLOSS BABELSBERG, July 9th, 1862.

"Enclosed is a copy of the Tsar's letter. The contents are very frank and friendly, but not apologetic."

There was thus some opposition from the King at the last moment, but it was soon overcome. Bernstorff was all the more pleased at his victory, as it meant a good deal to him to make Austria understand that it lay in the power of Prussia to go her own way in foreign politics, regardless of the views held at Vienna, where it was thought that Prussia must steer in the same waters. Bernstorff did not deem it unfortunate to have adopted the French view by this recognition. "The King said to me when I read your despatch to him," he writes on July 1st to Bismarck, "that you must be informed that he would not agree to an alliance with France. However, we cannot let it come to a Franco-Austrian alliance, only because we are too prudish. The recognition of Italy has a good effect at present, and carries us along on a more natural course with sound political interests. But it has given much trouble to bring his Majesty thus far. The answer from Sardinia, now on its way, is said to be satisfactory, and all will, I hope, be settled soon."

Meanwhile King William had addressed a letter to the Tsar, in which he evinced his usual tact in averting all unpleasantness which might arise in these trying political affairs. Goltz writes to Bernstorff on July 29th, 1862: "As I announced in my confidential letter yesterday, the King's letter has made a good impression everywhere, and has allayed anxiety lest the one-sided proceedings of Russia

in the Italian question might have offended our most gracious master." Colonel von Loën writes:—"The letter is very cordial. His Majesty shares the opinion of the Tsar, and says he will always hold to him." Goltz adds: "The Tsar is quite charmed with the King's letter, and cannot say enough kind things about him, thank God. No one can be more pleased, of course, than myself, and I believe that recriminations about past things would only estrange both sides to their mutual disadvantage. I venture to hope that his Majesty's kind forbearance will deter Prince Gortschakoff from further reckless action."

This paper shows how the King and Bernstorff had upheld the dignity and independence of Prussia without causing any lasting differences between the two countries. Bernstorff also gave instructions to the Prussian Ministers at St. Petersburg and Constantinople to accede to the wishes of Russia and those of the rest of Europe¹ at the Conference concerning Servia and Montenegro. Fortunately, the final decision in foreign policy did not rest with Gortschakoff, but with the Tsar, who though liable to be influenced by the whisperings of his Ministers, was also ready to let friendly feelings for Prussia conquer all irritation. When Bernstorff retired from office, he could justly declare that the relations between the countries were of the best.

He was proud of the termination of the Italian affair; and when back in London, he wrote to Bismarck on January 6th, 1863, that he "regretted Brassier's recall from Turin because it must make the impression of a complete change having been brought about in Berlin by the reactionary movement in our foreign policy, especially in connection with many other circumstances and with the altered policy in

Goltz to Bernstorff, St. Petersburg, August 18th, 1862. "They are enthusiastic about us here, owing to our conduct in the Servian and Montenegro affair."

France since the entrance of Drouyn de Lhuys into the French Cabinet. I am really sorry, because, little as I sympathize with Victor Emanuel and his Cabinet, I think, with you, that the recognition of Italy was our right policy."¹

¹ Bismarck Jahrbuch, vi., 168. Private letter.

CHAPTER XVII

DISCUSSION ON MILITARY AFFAIRS IN THE LANDTAG—BERNSTORFF'S RESIGNATION

The military question—The King's decree—The split in the Cabinet—Unfavourable result of the elections—The ministerial report of September 9th to the King—The King's proposed abdication—Bernstorff and his party resign—Field-Marshal Roon—Bismarck's nomination—Appreciation of Bernstorff's work.

THE increasing difficulties of internal policy, and the differences between the Government and Parliament concerning external affairs, such as the policy in regard to German affairs and Electoral Hesse, became accentuated and led to Bernstorff's resignation. The conflicts on army reform seemed hopeless; the Government had received a certain sum provisionally for this purpose, and the temporary arrangement came to an end on June 29th, 1861. The majority obtained by the progressive party at the elections in December of that year put them in the position of being able to reject the proposal for reorganization on the three years' system, and they refused all compromise. Hagen's motion on March 6th, demanding exact statements on every detail of the Budget, had been made for the definite object of preventing reform. On March 8th the Cabinet tendered its resignation to the King, but it was not accepted. On March 11th the Landtag was dissolved.

King Wilhelm's Decree to the Ministry.

"BERLIN, *March 11th*, 1862.

"Since the dissolution of the Lower House, I have received the report from the Minister of State dated March 9th, and I am obliged to revert to the last words of this report. It is therein stated that differences in the Cabinet might arise by further discussion, and this might necessitate the resignation of some of its members. Although expecting a report on the measures to be taken, I deem it indispensable to state my views on the crisis.

"By the neglect of the lawful and vigorous influence on the elections last autumn, which I in vain demanded of the Ministry, the result has been what I predicted, and the stand taken by the Chamber culminated in Hagen's motion and brought about the dissolution. Notwithstanding the measures brought forward by the Government, to which I reluctantly consented, the Chamber would not admit that the Government was desirous of widening the Constitution. For us, this extension is only possible on the understanding that . . . Prussia does not suffer. The tendency of members is to extend parliamentary legislation into a parliamentary government, which is their constitutional right. This is a tendency the Cabinet must oppose. . . . The whole struggle, therefore, rests on the question of how far the Royal Powers can be limited by a representative government.

"That the power of sovereigns of small states, such as Belgium, Bavaria, and Nassau, can be more restricted than that of a Great Power, is apparent; it is still more so when the question concerns Prussia, the smallest of the Great Powers. . . . The dignity and power of the Prussian crown must guard against the encroachment meditated by the Lower Chamber. . . .

"The Bills brought in prove that my Government wishes

the extension of the Constitution, as I stated in my programme on November 8th, 1858; they are the utmost that can be granted in this direction. . . . But after the dissolution of the Chamber there can be no question of further concessions. . . .

"The most important matter now is the influence upon the elections. Those of 1858 and 1861 led to sad results for us, paralyzing Prussia both in her internal and foreign policy for some time. I now look to the greatest despatch in Ministerial proposals. As I take it for granted that the Ministry agrees to these principles, I do not see any reason why in the report of the 9th there is a question as to the resignation of some members of the Cabinet.

"WILHELM."

Among Bernstorff's papers there is a draft of a second decree to the Ministry, dated March 12th, 1862, in which the King expresses his firm confidence in the electors and in their sense of responsibility; that they will not be led into error by exaggeration and misrepresentation of the Press. "The people of Prussia," the King concludes, "will not, I am convinced, weaken their country, for they cannot wish to present the spectacle to foreign countries of a break between the Government and their representatives. They will not under my Government be behind their ancestors!"

Thus the King placed great faith in the sagacity of the electors. There was less confidence among Ministers and officials. The Cabinet was composed of moderate Liberals and Conservatives. Unity on current questions was difficult to attain. The Conservative Ministers, von der Heydt, von Roon, and Count Bernstorff were resolved to draw attention to this, and they presented a memorial to the King, drawn up by Bernstorff. The impulse to this

step was the appointment of Prince zu Hohenlohe as President of the Council. It should be remembered that Schwerin had, in the name of the Liberals in the Cabinet, demanded concessions, especially in district organization, about which there had been opposition.

*Memorial from Minister von der Heydt, von Roon,
and Count Bernstorff.*

"BERLIN, March 13th, 1862.

"Programme drawn up by the desire of my two Conservative colleagues, and shortly after accepted by His Majesty the King, whereupon the Liberal members resigned, and a Conservative Government was formed on March 17th, 1862.

"BERNSTORFF."

The above note in pencil was added by Bernstorff.

"A discussion having taken place at the sitting of the Ministry yesterday as to what proposals should be made to His Majesty the King in consequence of his decree of March 11th, and the great and fundamental difference between the majority and minority in the Cabinet having been accentuated, Prince zu Hohenlohe, who has been recently appointed President of the Council, wishes to see the chief points drawn up. He will then have an audience of His Majesty concerning the proposed programme. The three undersigned Ministers have, therefore, agreed on the following questions. . . .

"1. The Government will be obliged to utilize all legal means at their disposal to exercise a legitimate influence on the elections. It will have to give positive instructions to all officials, especially to the Ober-Präsidenten, Regierungs-Präsidenten, and Landräte, concerning such persons

whom they may regard as candidates for Government.¹ No definite Government party existed until now in the country, and the Government, when it has no candidates of its own, will always give the preference, not only to the Liberal-Conservative, but to the Conservative candidates. . . .²

"The danger of getting a too Conservative or reactionary Lower Chamber is less likely now.³ The only real danger is that of a distinctly more Liberal Chamber, or one that would be in favour of a more parliamentary government.⁴ The late Cabinet was unable to avert this danger. . . . The Government has hitherto been vacillating, and has, therefore, found no support in the country, as has been proved at the last election. It only has the choice of supporting the great Conservative party, or to seek support⁵ among the advanced Liberals. Both alternatives are possible, but the latter is extremely dangerous, and against His Majesty's wishes.⁶ There is no middle course. The Government must choose between the two alternatives, if it does not wish a catastrophe. The choice is in the King's hands. After conscientious reflection the undersigned can only advise one course.

"One of the essential measures at the elections is the right guidance of the Press. This will not be, as formerly, by opposing the extreme parties, the Reactionaries and the Progressives; it will have to fight the latter only. It has made the dissolution necessary.⁷ The few Reactionaries, though in the minority, who forced on the dissolution

¹ Marginal note by the King: "Without, however, applying any method of intimidation."

² *Ibid.*: "Never really the 'Kreuz Zeitung' people."

³ *Ibid.*: "The extremists ruin themselves."

⁴ *Ibid.*: "Correct."

⁵ *Ibid.*: "Never."

⁶ *Ibid.*: "Right."

⁷ *Ibid.*: "But the Reactionaries in attacking the Government put it on the defensive."

would support rather than embarrass the Government, especially on the military question. Finally, the Minister of Justice must have increased influence over the law officials, especially the district judges, to prevent the ultra Liberals from agitating, and to recall them to the dignity of their office. . . ."

After proposing various measures, the Memorial continues :—

"7. Concerning foreign affairs, the Government must conduct steadily a peaceful policy, and, if need be, an active policy towards the Progressives, undisturbed by the attitude of opponents, at home or abroad. .

"8. As to the reduction of the military Budget by the majority of the Cabinet, and the possible reduction of twenty-five per cent. of the income-tax, the undersigned admit its importance. But whether a reduction of the military Budget is possible without putting an end to the reorganization, the undersigned must leave it to your Majesty's wisdom to decide. They are unable to find any justification for a conditional programme, as the Ministry made no opposition at the time to the King's Order of December 2nd, but received it in silence.

"If there is no possibility of a reduction, the three undersigned Ministers stand or fall, as they promised your Majesty months ago, with the Budget, thoroughly agreed that the reorganization of the army is indispensable to the country. Whether the requisite means are to be obtained by continuing the increased income-tax, or whether other means must be found, is for the Minister of Finance to decide.

"The undersigned feel it to be their duty to state again

¹ Marginal note by the King : "All observations, especially the last, to be implicitly obeyed by the Ministers."

that they wish no retrograde movement, but a Liberal administration on Conservative lines, and such reforms as are really necessary.

“(Signed)

“VON DER HEYDT.

“VON ROON.

“BERNSTORFF.

“BERLIN, *March 13th*, 1862.”

The counter-memorandum of the Ministers—Auerswald, Patow, Pückler, Schwerin, and Bernuth—of March 14th, 1862, which is also among Bernstorff's papers, gives lively expression to the views of the Liberal statesmen.

“BERLIN, 15/3/62.

“We consider it our sacred duty to defend the constitutional rights of the Crown, and to guard it from every diminution of power. But we are convinced that these rights are only secured if the rights of the representatives of the country are maintained as well, which are secured to them by the letter and spirit of the charter of the Constitution.¹

“Although the limits are not sharply drawn, three great parties exist in the country:—

“1. The Progressive Party in connection with the Democratic party.

“2. The old Liberals.

“3. The Reactionary or Feudal party.

“The Liberal party calls itself the constitutional, the Reactionary calls itself the Conservative, and both designations may lead to a misunderstanding: thus, many members of the Feudal party do not desire to set aside the Constitution, and the Liberal party in its thoughtful

¹ Marginal note by the King: “Herein lies the difference, that is, in the measure for carrying it out.”

members claims to be, and not without a right, the genuine Conservative.¹

"A Ministry which wishes to influence the coming elections, and one which promises to last, must have a majority in the country. In order to obtain this, it must support some party and be able to hope for a following, particularly from the great mass of people who keep outside all party questions.

"The Progressive party, at least, so far as it is a Democratic party, must be opposed. Of this there is no doubt. There only remains the choice between the other two parties.

"After mature and conscientious consideration of all circumstances, a Ministry can only have a certain prospect of a favourable result, by holding firmly to the programme of November 8th, and can only be supported if the Liberals are prepared to enter the lists. . . .

"We think that some further measures will have to be taken.

"When we consider what is to be done in the coming sessions, and what is to be done about the elections, our opinion is decidedly as follows:—

"1. At the next session of the Landtag, if circumstances are not changed, there would be no other Bills except that of the Commercial Treaties laid before the Chamber; and the Budget, the military supplement, and the income-tax.

"2. The Budget for 1862 must be made out in detail.²

"3. The reorganization of the army must be completed.

¹ Marginal note by the King: "I have desired the union from the Ministry for a year."

² *Ibid.*: "Minister Patow has indeed declared before the dissolution that this was impossible, and the vote of want of confidence followed."

The necessary expenses have a bad influence on the country, especially if loans have to be contracted for the formation of cavalry regiments, building ports, increasing the navy, and eventually strengthening the fortresses. The amount of the military Budget will doubtless influence the elections. We think that retrenchment is urgently called for, if possible, in the Budget of this year. If this is absolutely impossible, it will, at any rate, be requisite to exercise great economy in the reorganization of the army, the additional cavalry regiments,¹ the new arms, etc. We are confident that further economy can be carried out without being prejudicial to the organization and strength of the army.

"4. A moderate reduction in the fifteen per cent. additions to the income-tax is most desirable, but this matter must be duly considered, and will mainly depend upon the decision of point 3."

The Memorial closes thus: "No support at the election to the Conservatives, because they are enemies of the Government."² The undersigned end by offering to resign if the King's decision should be adverse to their views, and as this was the case, Schwerin, Auerswald, Patow, Bernuth and Pückler resigned. The King's decree of March 17th states the objects he had in view on the formation of the new Ministry.

¹ Marginal note by the King: "There has been no talk of this for a year."

² *Ibid.*: "Why not favour the reasonable Conservatives!" The Memorial has laid stress on the "Kreuz Zeitung" having summoned its friends in case the elections should take place under the auspices of the existing Ministry, to seriously consider whether they might not do better to leave the Government to certain defeat. The election of this party might be permitted, but could not be favoured. The King's marginal note was placed at the last sentence.

“BERLIN, *March 17th*, 1862.

“In forming the new Ministry, I remain firm to the principles expressed on November 8th, 1858, which I have reiterated at every opportunity.

“(a) The well-being of the Crown and that of the country are inseparable, and it rests upon sound Conservative principles. All extremes should be avoided.

“(b) A Government is strong when it is based upon truth, legality, and consistency.

“(c) Promises must be kept, but undue pressure for reform must be opposed with wisdom and courage.

“The consolidation of the Constitution has been promised and must be carried out. But the Crown must be strong.

“A great deal has been accomplished since 1858, and much had been laid before the Landtag. Moderation is the special aim of the Government. I shall watch, and in due time settle the measures to be taken against the Opposition, which hinders the healthy development of the country.

“The Bill of last session will again be laid before the new Landtag.

“The Budget is its first duty. If another way can be found to raise the money necessary for the reorganization of the army than by further taxation, I look to further proposals. Should the sum not cover the first year's expenses, I look to the Ministers, including the Minister for War, for retrenchments.

“I have had various proposals from the Minister for Foreign Affairs concerning German policy. Three years' firm adherence to the legal view of the constitutional question of Electoral Hesse has at last led to Austria's agreement with us, and in making with me the necessary proposals to the Federal Diet.

‘I repeat the views I have always maintained regarding

foreign policy; that we must preserve friendly relations towards all the Great Powers, but without surrendering ourselves to their influence, and without tying our hands by premature treaties.

"The chief task of the Ministry now is to exercise influence on the elections. All lawful means must be taken. I look to an immediate proposal to obtain a Chamber according to the above programme. The authorities must not, however, resort to threats or intimidation.

"May God bless us in all this!

"WILHELM."

Count zur Lippe, von Mühler, von Holzbrinck and Count von Itzenplitz were appointed to the vacant posts in the Ministry. The King hoped with the Conservative Ministry to carry on an effective military reform.

Postscript to a letter from the King to Prince Hohenlohe.

"BERLIN, *March 29th*, 1862.

"I have just read a poem in the 'Kreuz Zeitung,' called 'The Prophet,' signed 'Radis,' which clearly contains a summons to street fighting. This is an attack against my Government which must be combated; my last marginal note in the Memorial from the minority of the Ministry enforces this. Have this poem suitably commented on and criticized in the 'Stern Zeitung,' for I do not wish my Government to be suspected of connivance in such compositions."

Bernstorff replied to Bismarck's congratulations on the change in the Ministry on April 3rd: "Thank you for your congratulations on the change in the Ministry. Had it not taken place I should have resigned with the dissatisfied feeling of having made fruitless efforts and having in vain sacrificed

myself and even my reputation to bring about a change. That this has come about at last is the only justification in my eyes for the step I took in the path of duty at the King's desire. After this I might retire with a certain satisfaction, if it were not that the King would consider it a desertion. I must hold out, unless some special incident in the formation of the Ministry releases me."

The writ of the Minister of the Interior to the Ober-Präsident on March 22nd, 1862, takes the standpoint in regard to the elections contained in the Memorial presented by Bernstorff, Roon, and von der Heydt. The Conservatives were to be supported, but without any attempt at intimidation being made. The officials, as the official document states, were to be forbidden any agitation against the Government. Those who carried out these orders seem to have often gone beyond instructions, with the result that active influence on the elections aroused violent protests throughout the country. And when von der Heydt's private letter to Roon, in which he demanded a lowering of the estimates in the military Budget, became public, the Opposition felt themselves triumphant.

The documents given below refer to a fresh attempt towards an understanding in the Lower Chamber, according to von der Heydt's plan.

Field-Marshal von Roon to Count Bernstorff.

[Official Letter.]

"April 8th, 1862.

"I send to your Excellency in strict confidence the enclosed copy of a Cabinet order of the 5th, from the King to Field-Marshal von Wrangel, regarding the meeting of the commission of officers of high rank to consider the practicable reductions of expenses for the army."

Extract from the King's Cabinet Order.

"April 5th, 1862.

"My departed father and brother took, as was the custom in Prussia from time immemorial, the advice of the field officers before issuing important measures for the army.

"I also in 1859 called the officers of high rank under your presidency, in order to hear their views on the necessary reorganization of the army.

"This great measure for the good of the army, and, therefore, one of the most important things for the good of the country, has been begun. But in carrying it out I have continually considered the state of the finances. I have repeatedly said that the importance of this consideration has never been misunderstood by me; it has occasioned me to order only those measures which our finances permit, and to economize in so far as does not interfere with the efficiency of the army.

"The necessary conditions are: three years' service, and the present strength of the army. It is necessary to reduce expenses in the immediate future, in all branches of the state. I have also directed my Minister of War to suggest further economical measures to me. He proposes, owing to the importance of the matter, to consult the field officers of higher rank. I will appoint a Commission under your presidency to discuss the advisability of further temporary economy in the military Budget."

It would be beyond the limits of this work to enter into the parliamentary and political events of the next months. Reporting to the King on September 9th, the Ministry reverted again to the question of the Budget, laying stress on the great danger of the situation. Thus they come to the conclusion that if the Landtag rejected the estimate

and the Government was thereby deprived of the constitutional basis of the administration, it "could not possibly allow this burning conflict to continue," it "would be giving up the basis of the Constitution, because it would be asserting the right of decreeing public expenditure against the expressed decision of the country's representatives, and without a Budget."

Ministerial Report to the King.

"BERLIN, *September 9th*, 1862.

"In the present grave situation, we humbly beg to make a report to your Majesty regarding our position in the important matter of the debates on the military estimates now coming on in the Chamber, as well as the complications likely to arise from them.

"The Budget Commission in the Lower Chamber has proposed in its report on the army estimates for 1862, that, the expenditure of about six and a half millions thalers, required for the reorganization, should be struck out of the Budget, although the greater part has already been expended.

"The military estimates for 1862 have been calculated after those of the two preceding years, and according to the debates in the Landtag. The Government cannot admit that they have gone beyond their authority, or violated the Constitution, nor can they, by a supplementary proposal, ask for an indemnity for having taken this course. The Ministry, however, cannot shirk the responsibility in face of the threatening crisis, to consider all eventualities. So far as can be judged, it is expected that the proposals of the Budget Commission will be unanimously agreed to in the Chamber. In that case there will be a conflict between the Chamber and the Government, and it is the question whether it will be compatible with the dignity of the Government to

continue with such an adverse Chamber, or whether it is not better to dissolve at once. The Ministry will ask your Majesty's opinion, and seriously consider before taking such steps.

"If they decide not to dissolve, the Government would have to discuss with this Chamber the estimates for 1862. This will be carried to the Upper Chamber, and will certainly be thrown out; so there would again be the question of a dissolution, or whether the Landtag is to meet again next January to discuss the financial estimates.

"In this case it might be urged that the estimates for 1861 remain in force till the new ones are voted, and that, therefore, the Government can carry on its measures after the Budget of 1861, even though that of 1862 be rejected. It has hitherto been the procedure, though it is a question whether it is constitutional. . . . As soon, however, as it has been rejected, the Government loses every legal basis, as the estimates for 1861 were only made for that year. Should the Landtag throw it out, and the constitutional basis of the Government be thereby withdrawn, it would be impossible for the discussion to be continued, because the Ministry would be violating the Constitution if it usurped the right to spend the country's money against the expressed vote of its representatives, and without a legalized Budget. The Cabinet would then have no other way out of the difficulty than to propose the dissolution of the Chamber.

"It would be desirable to defer these extreme measures until next spring; we dare not, however, shut our eyes to the conviction that they may be inevitable within a short time, and we feel bound to declare it.¹

¹ Marginal note by the King (sent to the Ministry): "I cannot conceal my astonishment at the proposal contained in the report. Hitherto, after all debates, it was decided that if the Upper Chamber threw out the mutilated

"As soon as the Chamber decides, we shall not fail to present a report to your Majesty.

"(Signed)

"VON DER HEYDT. "VON ROON.

"VON MÜHLER. "COUNT VON ITZENPLITZ.

"COUNT ZUR LIPPE. "VON JAGOW.

"VON HOLZBRINCK. "BERNSTORFF."

It is significant that Roon signed this paper. He had been inclined towards a compromise, and at a sitting of the Landtag on September 17th, where Vincke spoke brilliantly in favour of reorganizing the army, and even Twesten called attention to the dangerous and practically inadmissible proposals of the Commission, Roon said on behalf of the Government, that "it did not speculate about what was called a conflict, but rather felt the need of bringing about an agreement on the question." The Chamber received the impression of Roon having thought it possible to come to an understanding on the basis of the two years' service. Bernstorff had also understood him in this sense, and in a conversation with Lord Augustus Loftus immediately after he had resigned, he said that Roon had made a concession on his own responsibility, without settling it with his colleagues beforehand.¹

military Budget, it would not be possible to go on with proposed estimates. Now this is declared unconstitutional, and a dissolution is advised, which has so far seemed most impracticable.

"As I retain my original opinion, I shall summon a Council to discuss this matter.

"(Signed) WILHELM."

"Baden, September 10th, 1862."

¹ Lord Augustus Loftus:—"But having made it, he considered that it should not be retracted." Bismarck also considered it possible to come to an understanding on the two years' service, as seen from the following passage in a letter to Bernstorff: ". . . The King once and for all rejects a two years' service. I abstain from criticism; a two years' service with those who re-engage for longer service in the infantry is probably sufficient. But if the King insists, I would not refuse to obey him in such matters." Bismarck Jahrbuch, vi., 166. Bismarck to Bernstorff. Berlin, November 21st, 1862.

In this same interview, Bernstorff told Lord Augustus his reasons for resigning. He said he had been unable to succeed because it would be either for the King to renounce the throne, or to resort to unconstitutional methods. The first course would be a misfortune for the country, and he knew the King would never resolve upon the second, and a compromise with the Landtag must, therefore, be made. Bernstorff complained at the end of the interview about the English Press, especially the "Times," on the subject of his resignation, which imputed retrograde and reactionary motives to him. He had, on the contrary, remained firm, and had openly declared his intention not to govern without a Budget. He would neither incur the reproach of being unconstitutional, nor make a spring in the dark.

In this connection his urgent request to the King to stand to his post is very interesting. This is contained in his letter of resignation, in which he touches upon the whole political situation :—

Count Bernstorff to King Wilhelm.

"BERLIN, September, 19th 1862.

"Most Gracious Majesty,

"I learn, to my profound regret, from the Crown Prince, that your Majesty still entertains the fatal idea of abdicating. If your Majesty feels yourself placed in a dilemma by the attitude of the Ministry, especially by that part of it to which I belong, it is all the more distressing to us, because we, above all things, desired to prevent such a fatal catastrophe, and to this end offered our advice. The time must come when it will be necessary to come to an agreement with the members of the Landtag about the reorganization of the army, and the means for maintaining it. The longer this is delayed the more inevitable will the necessity become, after all constitutional means have been exhausted. . . . For this reason, it was my urgent desire,

and that of some of my colleagues, to save your Majesty from such an eventuality, and to seize the means which seemed providentially offered to make an agreement by which the reorganization need not be deferred.

"We may be mistaken, and I shall be delighted if this be so, and if your Majesty ultimately succeeds in carrying out your will on constitutional lines. The sentiments which prompted my respectful and frank objections are well known to your Majesty. But as your Majesty was moved to say at the Council the day before yesterday that those of us who could not agree with your Majesty might resign, I earnestly and respectfully beg your Majesty to be permitted to do so. It is against my sense of duty to govern without a Budget, or with one rejected by the Chamber. And the declaration of the Minister of War yesterday is further disastrous to the Chamber, as I had anticipated. The Ministry is seriously compromised, and I feel unable to serve your Majesty with any success.

"It is my most earnest desire that your Majesty will not act upon the fatal idea to which I have alluded, and that I may still faithfully serve your Majesty in another post.

"With deepest respect,

"I am your Majesty's obedient servant,

"BERNSTORFF."

After the King's suggestion that those members of the Ministry¹ who disagreed should resign, a minority did so, and as they wished to justify themselves to the King, Bernstorff undertook to do this for them. The following Memorial is in his handwriting, and it shows in what a dignified manner he complied with the request of his

¹ The members of the Ministry belonging to the moderate Conservative party agreeing with Bernstorff were von Holenlohe-Ingelfingen, von der Heydt, von Jagow, and von Holzbrinck.

colleagues, and, founded on constitutional principles, his arguments are irrefutable.

Memorial drawn up by Count Bernstorff.

“BERLIN, September 19th, 1862.

“At the last sitting of the Council differences of opinion arose in the Cabinet, and views have been expressed from the throne which the minority find it difficult, indeed, impossible, to agree with. The Ministry must agree and must state to His Majesty what are their views throughout all phases of the crisis.

“In the report of the Cabinet of the 9th of this month it was stated that the continuation of the Government in office after the Budget had been rejected was unconstitutional, and that if His Majesty did not accept the resignation of his Ministers, nothing remained but to dissolve the Chamber. His Majesty would not agree to this, and in a Decree on the 10th, and at the last sitting of the Council, His Majesty maintained that he could govern during the Fiscal Year without a Budget. The majority did not oppose this, so that the minority were left unsupported.

“In the Memorandum of March 13th of the minority in the last Cabinet, the three signatories declared that they would stand and fall with the army Budget if no reduction were possible. They have hitherto faithfully fulfilled this obligation, and will undoubtedly continue to do so. But they have not promised to go further. If they cannot with constitutional means obtain the indispensable estimate, they will fall with it, and if the difference between the Crown and the Lower Chamber continues after all constitutional means have been exhausted, there remains for the Government only the first of two alternatives, namely, either to give way or to carry out its purpose by other means. . . .

"The Ministry must be perfectly clear as to whether they would advise the Crown to adopt unconstitutional means, and whether they could make use of them. The minority think that so far as they are concerned, they must decline to enter upon this course, and after the report of the 9th of this month, consider that all the Ministry are of this opinion. They also venture to think it doubtful whether His Majesty would accept this advice if it were tendered by the other side.

"If it be possible for the Ministry to agree on these questions, it should be done at once, and the united opinion should be placed before His Majesty.

"BERNSTORFF."

On September 20th Bernstorff wrote to Roon that it was far from his intention to give offence to him and his followers, by his vindication of the opinions of the minority. Roon replied at once :—

Von Roon to Count Bernstorff.

[Private letter.]

"BERLIN, *September 21st*, 1862.

"Your Excellency,

"I have the honour to reply to your letter of yesterday. Although I am very glad to find from your Excellency's assurance that 'nothing was further' from you than personally to wound me and the majority of our colleagues by the expression you employed both in tendering your resignation and at the evening sitting on the 19th; yet, on the other hand, I am obliged to say that the opinion I expressed on the 19th, that the view taken in your Excellency's letter to the King and at our evening sitting, of the episode which you think compromised the Government, makes further continuance in office very doubtful. As your Excellency based your resignation on the harm

inflicted by my declarations on the 17th and 18th, it was sufficient reason for me to doubt whether I ought, and whether it would be well for His Majesty's service for me to remain at your side. This so-called compromise is not, I believe, the only reason of your resignation, as your Excellency has frankly said, but the differences in political views. But I will not enter into any controversy on this subject. I feel in duty bound, however, to make a report on the differences to His Majesty, which I think make the position of the present Ministry untenable. My resignation I think necessary, if His Majesty gives way in regard to the question now pending. On the other hand, it would awaken hopes in the Opposition, and discourage the friends of the Government throughout the country. For myself, personally, it is a matter of indifference.

"The duty of representing my views to His Majesty is still even more plain after your Excellency's note of to-day. I consider the breaking up of the Cabinet at present to be a very serious calamity, and one which I certainly do not wish, but it appears to me to be a still greater evil for it to continue without complete unanimity as to ways and means.

"In conclusion, I beg your Excellency to permit me to express my sincere regret that it has been necessary to enter into this discussion. Be assured that it does not preclude a high appreciation of your motives, and I again repeat the high esteem with which

"I am and remain, faithfully yours,

"ROON."

After all the necessary demands for means to reorganize the army had been refused by the Landtag, Hohenlohe and von der Heydt resigned. Bismarck was appointed. He was at first President of the Council, and then Minister for

Foreign Affairs. The erroneous idea must here be refuted that Bernstorff had only resigned his office on being urged to do so by Bismarck. He by no means clung to office, but had, on the contrary, frequently begged to be permitted to give it up. As has already been stated, he repeatedly recommended the King to appoint Bismarck, and his advice was at last accepted.

Bernstorff could claim the credit of having skilfully conducted Foreign Affairs, and to have prepared the way, in close co-operation with the King, for Bismarck to attain his great national ends.

He had, however, long been convinced that he was not to be the pioneer in the struggle for German unity, which had been his dream since his youth. His health was seriously affected, and had been when he entered the Ministry, and for that reason, he had stipulated that he might eventually return to his post in London. There was also another reason for his resignation. He had become strongly persuaded that Prussia would never be able to obtain the hegemony of Germany until the struggle between the Crown and the Landtag was settled. An understanding must be arrived at in one way or another, if the country, weakened by its own party strife, was not to succumb in the conflict that was foreseen. This may be called a mistake now on looking back to the history of Bismarck's time, but even his friends anxiously questioned whether he would weather the storm. It is easy to judge after the event, but who can find fault with Bernstorff for desiring to have a united Prussia before she should try the issue of the great future. Brought up in the school of deep-rooted Conservatism, and of an unalterable loyalty, he did not wish to act against the Constitution once it had been accepted.

It had been under consideration for some time before Bernstorff's resignation to raise the Legations at Paris and

London to the rank of embassies.¹ In September Bismarck mentions this subject in a letter to his wife.² Therefore when Bernstorff sent in his resignation to the King on September 24th, 1862, he reminded him of his promise to let him return to his post in London, or go to Paris, in case of his retirement from the Cabinet, and he respectfully declared that after his present position, "he could not return to the diplomatic service except as Ambassador." The change was not made for him personally. Bernstorff further said that though he was prepared to retain his post till Bismarck could take it up, he would be glad, on account of his family arrangements, to have his stay in Berlin made as short as possible, and to return to London on October 10th, at latest. And he concludes: "It is harder to me than I can say to depart from the immediate personal intercourse with your Majesty, and to leave a post which interests me so deeply, but your Majesty will be convinced that I only do so from conscientious motives. I beg to express my deepest gratitude for your Majesty's confidence and kindness."

To Count Bernstorff.

"BABELSBERG, *October 8th*, 1862.

"I relieve you of your office as Minister for Foreign Affairs, at your repeated request, and at the same time, I do so with the fullest recognition of your faithful devotion to office. You retain your title and rank of Cabinet Minister. I appoint you my Ambassador to Great Britain. As your successor here, I have appointed Herr von Bismarck-Schönhausen, and have announced it to the Ministry.

"WILHELM.

"V. BISMARCK."

¹ See Lord Augustus Loftus.

² Letters from Bismarck to his wife: "September 21st, 1862. Our Legation at Paris is now to be raised to the rank of an embassy."

Count Bernstorff to Prince Heinrich VII., Reuss.

[Private letter.]

"BERLIN, *October 2nd*, 1862.

"This will be the last time that I write to you from here, for I hope to receive my official release the day after the King's return, and then we must hasten away before my wife's confinement, crossing the Channel to take up my former post as Ambassador. I had placed myself at the King's disposal either for Paris or London, but said that my own wishes were to return to London, if the King had not particular reasons for sending me to Paris. I can tell you in confidence that as Bismarck wishes to keep the Paris post open a little while, I am appointed to London, which I most decidedly prefer. Herr von Bismarck will return to Paris at the close of the session to present his recall and to bring back his papers, and to have some conversation with the Emperor.

"I cannot say much by letter about my resignation. I think the Ministry has unfortunately run into a cul-de-sac, and that the Cabinet is in an irresolute state, lacking in decision, and aimless between the King and an unmanageable Chamber. . . . All efforts in foreign policy have been unsuccessful, and must to a great extent remain paralyzed, as long as this state of things lasts. Under such circumstances, I consider it the right thing to try a man like Herr von Bismarck, and I wish him every possible success, but whether he will obtain it, is doubtful. There could be no talk of my remaining in the Cabinet with him, as we both agree that two Foreign Ministers in one Cabinet would be too much of a good thing.

"I am very glad to get away from this boat, especially as to internal affairs, though I am sorry to give up the Foreign

Office, as I have a tremendous interest in it, and frequent change is always harmful. *The King has expressly desired Herr von Bismarck to continue my policy in the German questions and in the Commercial Treaty.*"

Bernstorff's ministerial work is broadly sketched in a letter from a friend, who says that he succeeded, notwithstanding the complicated state of internal affairs, in clearing external relations, in resuming positions which had been disgracefully yielded, and in restoring the basis of a definite political and commercial policy. This passage briefly characterizes Bernstorff's actions in foreign affairs. His work has not been sufficiently appreciated even in historical writings which are favourable to him. That it was his merit to have set the wheels of Prussian foreign policy going in the right direction cannot be contested. When he entered office, the foreign policy had a bad reputation all over Germany, especially in all national questions. Prussia was regarded as reactionary, both in home and foreign affairs, and the courage and good will of her leaders to guide the German people towards the summit of their aspirations, German unity, was doubted. Bernstorff had also to endure distrust, but his straightforward manliness, his genuine German feelings, his bearing towards his opponents soon enabled him to rise above all this. It was to his advantage that throughout his entire ministry he had conducted internal affairs successfully, and committed himself in no direction. His conservatism was known to be far removed from that of the extreme Right. True German as he was, he had again occasion for annoyance in the assertion of the latter party that he was a Lauenburg "foreigner," who had no right to speak on Prussian affairs. When, therefore, he had the courage to take up the Schleswig-Holstein question from the German

standpoint, and oppose Denmark, he was designated by the same set as he had been in earlier times, as the "Schleswig-Holsteiner." But Germany should never forget that he who was a Lower-Saxon nobleman in the best sense, defied a world of prejudices and obtained for Prussia the recognition of the doctrine of the inseparableness of the Elbe Duchies, which were so ill-treated by the Danes. No one could think that he who knew Schleswig-Holstein so well, and was attached to the Duchies by so many ties, would bandy words or inaugurate the action concerning them merely for show. No one, at least, would, for a moment, think so, who had the smallest remnant of political impartiality, and who was not enslaved by party considerations.

Some historical writers have endeavoured to prove that Bernstorff only followed the King's initiative in national questions, but those who have followed his life and actions cannot share this view. It was because the King in years of personal friendship had recognized him as an independent thinker, and true German, that he appointed him to the Foreign Office, and by so doing placed the right man in the right place. Kindred spirits met in this struggle, and it was a trial to part from one whom he would gladly have retained at his side. When Count Bernstorff placed his portfolio in His Majesty's hands he made the most difficult decision of his life. A wide field of great national work lay before him, one in which he could have carried out, had he remained in office, a great and signal work for Germany. There is no manner of doubt that he resigned office because he was of the opinion that this end could only be accomplished if all the factors of the state were united.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE RUPTURE WITH DENMARK, 1862-1864

The return to London—The death of the Prince Consort—Fresh alienation between England and France—Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell—The Schleswig-Holstein Question and Queen Victoria—English sympathy for Austria—The Princes' Diet at Frankfort—Rapprochement between Austria and Prussia—Proceedings of the Diet—The English Press against Prussia—Austrian and Prussian troops cross the Eider—English sympathy for Denmark—The Austrian squadron in the Baltic—Storming of the entrenchments at Düppel—The People's Movement in Germany—Bernstorff's work at the Conference—Austria supports the Duke of Augustenburg—The English plan for the partition of Schleswig—The dispute about the frontier—Bernstorff and the frontier line of Flensburg and Tondern—The claim of Oldenburg—Conclusion of the Conference—Recommencement of the war—Alsen taken—Taking possession of Jutland—Peace with Denmark—Bernstorff's negotiations concerning Lauenburg.

WHEN Count and Countess Bernstorff returned to London on October 18th, 1862, after the resignation of the Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen Ministry, they found great changes had taken place in society, especially at Court, owing to the death of the Prince Consort. The Queen's grief had at first been so great that she could not bear to see new faces, nor turn to the affairs of the country. With his death all joy and brightness had gone out of her life, and the better part of the nation sorrowed with her. Although the English people had had little sympathy for "the German Prince," "the stranger," and "the foreigner," during his lifetime, they began to recognize his quiet but active influence when it was suddenly withdrawn from political life, and to praise the Prince Con-

sort's good qualities and his varied gifts; and there gradually grew up throughout the country a sort of cult of him, which was warmly encouraged by the Queen.

When Bernstorff returned, the Queen had been fulfilling the duties of her great position, but a sad cloud overshadowed her and the life at Court, which contrasted strangely with earlier times. And there had been many changes in the foreign policy of the Government. The entente between the Western Powers had been factitiously revived, but a coolness ensued. Count von Brandenburg had reported to Bernstorff, while he held the seals of the Foreign Office, that Palmerston inclined to a coalition between the Middle European Powers and assigned an important rôle to Prussia. It was regrettable that the antipathy of this statesman against Prussia was too deep to be eradicated by considerations of prudence. This animosity mastered him again when the shadow of the Schleswig-Holstein question arose between England and Prussia. Fortunately, Bernstorff's relations with Lord Russell (who, despite many faults, had warm human feeling and a sense of justice, and who had informed himself about the real facts of the Elbe Duchies, and how they were viewed by German statesmen) made it possible to correct the effects of Palmerston's ill will. Bernstorff in a private letter to Balan, the Prussian Minister at Copenhagen, writes concerning his relations with Lord Russell, and gives his opinion on the foreign situation.¹

He writes:—"I had begun a letter in Berlin to thank you for yours of last month, but tore it up, because it was left unfinished owing to our moving. Many thanks for your kind words of farewell. It grieved me to resign the work I had been doing, with much pleasure, and great labour, for a year, bestowing upon it as much care as if it

¹ Bernstorff to Balan. London, November 11th, 1862.

were my own child. Still, the internal state of affairs made it impossible for me to remain, and I was forced to see that foreign affairs could not be carried on with any success, so long as things continued as they were, though I think that my consistent conduct of political questions will not prove useless in time to come. The practical result of a year's just and consistent policy, especially in relation to the question in your sphere of work, is visible, for the European Powers view it differently, and England, in particular, has assumed a pacific attitude from which she cannot well retreat. *My despatch of August 22nd has brought about this change, as well as my confidential correspondence with Lord Russell, as he himself admits.*¹

Bernstorff's relations with Lord Russell are frequently alluded to in Bernhardt's diary. He, however, estimates Bernstorff's influence over Lord Russell as far less than it was. "Lord Russell,"² he writes, "knows quite well that Germany is in the right in this question. He has had occasion, particularly of late, and through Bernstorff, to enter into the matter, which had hitherto been unknown to him. But this tardy understanding of it is of very little use, for Lord Russell is so far bound by his former actions that he is unable to retreat, and the position of the Cabinet towards Parliament is very weak, and they cannot act with complete freedom. The Tories are in the majority in the Lower House, and are able to defeat the Government whenever they wish to do so. They are fanatically Danish, less from honest conviction than from a desire to curry favour with the Prince and Princess of

¹ In the same letter Bernstorff says :—"In your last letter you tell me how unpleasant it is to be sending despatches, and never to receive any answers. I have observed this disadvantage myself from the time of my entrance upon office, and have expressly ordered a change in the conduct of business to be made, and a regular political correspondence to be carried on."

² "The Life of Theodor von Bernhardt." Vol. v., pp. 272-3.

Wales, and gain them over to their own side. Thus, owing to the pressure which they can bring to bear, the Cabinet dare not act adversely towards the Danes, and they will yield to this pressure in order to remain in power."

The Queen sympathized with Germany in the Schleswig-Holstein question because the Prince Consort, who had always retained his German opinions on the subject, had initiated her into the rights and wrongs of it. The innermost desire of her heart remained unshaken—that there should be no breach between Austria and Prussia over the Schleswig-Holstein question. Personal motives also played a part, for she constantly feared that if it came to war between the two German Powers, Prussia might fall, and her daughter and son-in-law would lose the chance of ascending the throne. In her motherly solicitude, she went so far as to beg the Emperor Francis Joseph in 1863 to do nothing which might endanger the rights of her children. It certainly seemed as if it would come to a breach between Austria and Prussia that year. Bismarck had, at the end of the Polish rising concerning the Convention with Russia,¹ approached Russian statesmen, so that now Austria, England, and France acted as mediators on one side, while Prussia and Russia were on the other. The Russian Cabinet even hoped to move Prussia to a common war against Austria and France. Bismarck, however, refused; he merely wished to decline diplomatically such intervention.

¹ Bismarck Jahrbuch, vi., 173-4. Bismarck to Bernstorff. Berlin, March 9th, 1863. Private letter.

"The British warmth against our Convention I can but explain as English ignorance of the intimate relations in Continental politics. . . . The King was somewhat annoyed at the way the Convention was brought before the English Parliament; without Russell's communications, which were not quite accurate, we should not have had half that much noise in the Chamber and the Press. . . . The affair is now, God grant, settled."

The defeat of Russia's opponents was ascribed to the Cabinet at Berlin by English politicians. This caused strained relations between the two countries, and made Bernstorff's position in London very unpleasant. The English Press attacked Prussia much as it had done during the Crimean War, and in society taunts at Prussian policy were not lacking, sometimes even in the presence of Count and Countess Bernstorff. Thus it happened that when Austria's plans for German reform came up again, which had, as their object, the union of the German people under Francis Joseph, they were largely acceptable in England because they were anti-Prussian. When they fell through owing to King Wilhelm's absence from the Princes' Diet at Frankfort, there was some irritation in England that the power of Prussia was still so great. The English enemies of Prussia had to swallow their anger, as Palmerston, for well-known reasons, did not desire to break entirely with Prussia. When the tension increased later on about the Schleswig-Holstein question, and public opinion in England against Prussian policy became stronger, Palmerston no longer restrained his feelings. The Danes had been strengthened in their defiance by the last English Note. That their case was lost in Holstein they had long been aware, and they, therefore, insisted the more violently on the inseparableness of Schleswig and Denmark, as the programme of the "Eider Danes." After the death of King Frederik, the illegal measure succeeded. The "Protocol Prince," Christian of Glücksburg, was called to the throne, and was compelled by the excited Danish people to accept the new Constitution, and with it, the incorporation of Schleswig with Denmark. This was a breach of all international arrangements, and as Napoleon III. declared, at the close of the year, that he no longer recognized the Treaty of 1815, European complications

seemed imminent. Even the inert German Confederation was roused by the defiance of Denmark. In October, 1863, the Saxon and Hanoverian troops, by a Federal execution, drove the Danes out of Holstein.

The object of this work is not to give in detail the history of Bismarck's policy towards the Duchies. Wise and far-reaching as it was, only a select few understood it at that time. The "Kladderadatsch" very aptly published a picture a year later which represented Bismarck as manager of a circus, making the riding-school horse, "Policy," ride through the High School. Bismarck, by taking his stand on the ground of the London Protocol, which recognized the King of Denmark's right to the whole kingdom, and only demanded for Schleswig-Holstein their stipulated rights, quieted Austria and Russia. As he also knew how to manage matters with Louis Napoleon, he could defy the anger of England and calmly wait till Danish arrogance tore up the London Protocol, and by so doing cleared the road for Prussia.

The Diet refused the new constitution for Schleswig on January 14th, 1864, whereupon the two German Great Powers announced their separate action, the occupation of Schleswig being their object. On February 1st Wrangel and Gablenz crossed the Eider. The indignation was great in England, every victory increasing the reproaches against the English Cabinet, which was considered inactive and yielding towards Austria and Prussia. When the army stood before Düppel and the occupation of Jutland followed, Bernstorff described the embarrassment of the English Government as follows:—¹

"The position of the English Government is greatly shaken, and Lord Palmerston has, perhaps, never in the whole course of his life found himself in such a dilemma.

¹ Bernstorff's despatch to the King. London, February 17th, 1864.

The reason is owing to the split in the Cabinet, one party inclining towards peace and the other towards war. Lord Russell himself is moved by contradictory feelings, and wears an anxious expression. But, even under present circumstances, Lord Palmerston would be able to obtain a majority in the Cabinet for war, were it not that the sympathies of the Queen raise an insurmountable barrier, as long as she can count upon others to carry on the Government if Palmerston should resign. . . . The consciousness of having such a reserve has doubtless given the Queen courage to oppose her warlike Prime Minister, and to refuse her consent when he wished to allude to war in the speech from the throne.

"One can understand how this excites a man like Lord Palmerston, and that his excitement is particularly directed against those who have brought about this situation. These are the two German Great Powers, which have not been turned from their course either by threats or well-meant counsels. Prussia, in particular, according to Lord Palmerston, stroked Austria with cat's paws, and forced her against her own interests into this very dangerous war. When Palmerston said this to me, I replied that if Austria were really in so dangerous a situation, it was all the more reason for her to value such a good ally as Prussia; and I added that both countries were but acting on the advice which the English Government had often given them, and that it was a great satisfaction to me that Austria and Prussia were fighting again as brothers-in-arms. This would answer for the security of Germany. When Lord Palmerston ironically asked me how long the alliance would last, hinting at the same time that he could obtain alliances for England which could be a danger to us, I replied that there was no reason to doubt the continuation of an alliance which was for our joint interest, and

that while Austria and Prussia were united, I had no fear of any alliance in the world."¹

Bernstorff feared that England might appeal to the hostile section in Austria, and with their help try to withdraw her from the alliance with Prussia. It seemed the more dangerous to him, as he did not altogether trust the Austrian Cabinet. Lord Palmerston's praise of Austria aroused his suspicions, for either the English Minister thought to compromise that country in the eyes of Prussia, or Austria herself was playing a double game, and was giving different assurances in London from those she gave in Berlin. English public opinion became stronger against Prussia every day. It was generally given out that Prussia was responsible for the war, and that Austria was less to blame. At last, after long lamentation, the English Press took comfort to itself from the following circumstance. According to Bernstorff, these papers noticed with satisfaction that the nomination of the Prince of Augustenburg as Duke was not acceptable in Berlin, and therefore concluded that hereby Prussia would put herself in opposition to the wishes of the majority of the German people. Fresh hopes arose in England for the victory of the Danish cause, which they erroneously regarded as the just one. But Denmark seemed really to aim at destroying the hopes of her English friends; for the German Confederation were forced by her aggressive measures at sea to take part in the war, which till then had been fought only by Prussia and Austria. This was another disappointment for England. The papers there declared with warmth that they took the side of the small country attacked by its powerful oppressor. Hardly ten people in England had an idea of the national German sentiments in Schleswig-Holstein.² This much was a fact,

¹ Bernstorff's despatch to the King. London, February 10th, 1864.

² There were only a few exceptions to this in the Press in England. Their

that the occupation of Jutland threatened to bring about a new aspect of the Schleswig-Holstein question. "The bow is drawn so tight now," writes Bernstorff in a despatch on February 25th, "that if we draw it more, the breach is unavoidable. Unfortunately it is not the right which decides in politics, but interest and the power to make it prevail."¹ It is, besides, the aura popularis here which decides. As public opinion would never suffer an Austrian fleet to pass the coasts of England on its way to bombard Copenhagen, it is not disposed either to permit Denmark to be occupied by the allies." Bernstorff goes on to say that it will be impossible for Prussia to ignore this opinion. Prussia can defy even an alliance between England and France as soon as she is certain of the help of Austria, but who can prophesy now what will be the policy of Austria as to Schleswig-Holstein? He thus indicated the subject of his chief anxiety. He feared that after great sacrifices Prussia might suddenly be left standing alone. At the end he says with some bitterness the personal union between Denmark would be all that could be attained for Germany, and the "German brothers in Holstein and Schleswig," by the war.

In view of all these circumstances it seemed to Bernstorff that the proposal of the British Cabinet to hold a Conference in London was suspicious. He discussed the matter with Bismarck by letter as to whether it would be opportune to negotiate on the Schleswig-Holstein question in London.

special correspondents at headquarters had to recognize that the southern part of Schleswig was thoroughly German, and that the German population of both Duchies were opposed to the Danes. (Bernstorff's despatch to the King. London, February 19th, 1864.)

¹ Bernstorff's despatch of February 25th, 1864.

Bernstorff to Bismarck.

"LONDON, *February 25th*, 1864.

"As it seems likely that a Conference on the Danish question will take place as suggested by England, and accepted by the German powers, I will not delay mentioning the considerations against its taking place in London, which are especially based on the personalities in question. Independently of the fact that the English who would attend it are hostile to the German claims, and that even Lord Russell would only with the greatest reluctance go beyond his earlier proposals, it must be remembered that this Minister cannot lead such a Conference in French, and that the actual leading of it would be in the hands of the Russian Ambassador, who has much skill and experience in that sort of thing. He has already been useful to Lord Russell in the Conferences on the Greek and Ionian affairs by transferring the English proposals into French, and by his experience and by his facility in obtaining information.

"Baron Brunnow, the Russian Ambassador, would be the worst possible guide for us in such negotiations, because, being the chief originator of the Treaty of London, his ambition and personal vanity would induce him to maintain it. He is constantly working to this end, and is much excited at the possibility of his labours being set aside.

"The Swedish Minister is through and through Danish in sympathy.

"The Prussian Plenipotentiaries would have little support against these influences from the Austrian Ambassador, who having but a superficial knowledge of the whole question, would, with the best will, be unable to help.

"Whether the French Ambassador is to be counted upon as a confederate or as an opponent, cannot with certainty

be foreseen. The latter seems the more probable, if we do not first come to an understanding with France. The only supporter might be the delegate of the German Federation, but only if the Great Powers were in perfect accord with the Federation as to the objects to be obtained."

Bernstorff's advice about holding the Conference in London was not attended to. Though there were weighty objections to the Conference, its acceptance accomplished a certain good in smoothing the high waves of excitement in England. Nothing further was said about an English fleet supporting Denmark. But the intrigues lasted some time longer. Bernstorff, from various signs, believed in a rapprochement between England and France; but he could not see quite clearly in this direction, owing to his lack of exact information respecting the relations between the Prussian Government and Louis Napoleon. He complained to Goltz that the despatches from Paris were withheld from him, and that it was but recently that some communication had been made to him. Goltz replied with some bitterness. The alpha and omega of his views, as stated in his correspondence with Bernstorff, was a warning against Bismarckian policy. Bernstorff could not share this sort of pessimism; with all his anxieties he had a firm faith in Prussia, and he writes as follows to Goltz on March 7th:—"We are as in an enemy's country here," and he adds: "Notwithstanding all the dangers which surround us, I must, on the whole, say that it is a satisfaction for me to see Prussia in action and in brotherhood in arms with Austria. It almost outweighs everything else. We must again be reckoned with, and make our weight felt in Europe. If we had but done this in 1859! It would have saved us both much that was unpleasant, and have simplified and prevented a good deal.

God grant His Blessing to the new alliance in arms, and may it continue!"¹

The military operations in Jutland caused a strained situation in London, especially when the Austrian squadron approached on its way to the Baltic. This was pouring oil on the flames. Palmerston gave way to some violence in the House, and said that Prussia and Austria knew that their combined fleets could not be measured against that of England. "The Queen," Bernstorff announces, "fortunately stands true to her convictions against all this agitation, and I am told that she clearly understands the question."²

The King of the Belgians, then in London, was as Bernstorff reported, on the side of the Queen, and through his and her influence, several members of Parliament spoke in favour of the rights of Schleswig-Holstein, and opposed the English Government in its desire to base the negotiations on the Treaty of London.³ Bernstorff urged his Government to declare the Treaty, to which all enemies of Germany clung, null and void. It was possible to do this before the Conference met, when the opponents of Prussia would strongly oppose them. He also warned the Government in Berlin against the intrigues of the French Plenipotentiaries against Prussia and Germany. He had, at last, learnt some facts concerning Bismarck's negotiations with Louis Napoleon.

¹ Bernstorff to Goltz. Private letter. London, March 7th, 1864.

He enclosed some English political articles which recognized the German rights, and among them, "The Dano-German conflict," by Lord Russell's friend, Morier, in Berlin, and "Schleswig-Holstein, an historical survey, by a Manchester merchant" (Jacob Cohn). Of the latter Bernstorff says:—"The little paper is strikingly good, and written to the point. It is by a merchant, and quite suitable for the English public. It has met with success, and I hope it will not be without some result."

² Bernstorff's despatch to the King. London, March 16th, 1864.

³ The friends of Denmark ridiculously assert that if the state of things is so bad the Schleswig-Holsteiners would have long since rebelled, as the Belgians did. Thus is interpreted the pacific attitude of the people.

He knew that the Emperor was inclined to make concessions in regard to Schleswig-Holstein, but he had not much faith in peace, because he did not believe that the Emperor would come into conflict with England. France and England, as he writes to Bismarck, would always have a tendency to keep as close as possible to the arrangements of 1851-2. At most, they would concede the southern part of Schleswig with the concurrence of the representative assembly, or on the ground of a plebiscite, to be joined with Holstein in one administration, and would approve of the incorporation of the rest of the Duchies with Denmark.

The storming of the trenches at Düppel on April 18th had nearly set the ball rolling in London, and when the Austrian fleet came in sight of the coast of England, a general war cry arose. Owing to Lord Palmerston's renewed threats, the Austrian Cabinet was obliged to declare that these ships were to keep at a distance from the Baltic. "The tone of the majority of the papers," Bernstorff writes, "surpasses in violence and impertinence all that one has ever experienced. These papers do not disdain to lie and calumniate, in order to blacken us in public opinion, attacking our honour, our dearest interests, and our most sacred feelings."¹

But German public opinion also rose high, and the whole of the country and the much-excited people of Schleswig-Holstein demanded the separation of the Duchies from Denmark. All eyes were turned expectantly to the London Conference, hoping that the German delegates might succeed in firmly representing German policy to England, France, and Russia. At the sitting on May 12th Bernstorff proclaimed in the name of the two German Great Powers the annulment of the Treaty of 1852, adding

¹ Bernstorff to the King. London, May 5th, 1864.

that Prussia and Austria were willing to enter upon any suitable combination which might lead to peace, without destroying well-earned rights.¹ The last limitation was destined to soothe "the very perturbed consciences" of the Austrian delegates. Bernstorff had had a conversation with Lord Clarendon before the sitting, who had declared his readiness to make an honourable compromise.² He also tried to influence Lord Russell in the same way. "I have convinced Lord Russell," he writes in his despatch concerning the sitting, "as I succeeded with Lord Clarendon yesterday, that the maintenance of the integrity of Denmark is impossible for us, and that if they expect us to evacuate Jutland without a great European war, they must, *circulus vitiosus*, offer us an acceptable way out, caused by the Treaty of London. I expressed my opinion that the only possible compromise was the complete separation of the nationalities, that is, a partition of Schleswig. Lord Russell then endeavoured to convince me about the Danish plan, the union of the southern part of Schleswig with Holstein. When, however, I decidedly rejected that proposal, he actually hinted that he was inclined to plead for the entire separation of the two nationalities at the meeting of the Cabinet. They must, first of all, come to an understanding with France, he said, and when I replied that I thought that country would make no difficulties, he agreed with me. The opposition of Russia does not seem to signify much in spite of the peremptory, I should almost say, the passionate way in which Baron Brunnow spoke yesterday in favour of the integrity of Denmark, which he identified with the peace of Europe. Lord Russell did not seem to expect any unconquerable opposition, as I had fancied, from Lord Palmerston."

¹ Bernstorff's despatch to the King. London, May 13th, 1864.

² Clarendon was second English Plenipotentiary at the Conference.

When he reported on the favourable disposition of the English Minister, Bernstorff did not conceal from the Prussian Cabinet that he regarded the difficulties in bringing the question of the Duchies to a successful issue, as very great. He could only find a way out of this chaos if in possession of the intentions of the Prussian statesmen, and with full power of action. "In any case, one thing is certain: the less the Government gives the appearance of wishing to obtain territory, the stronger will be the position of Prussia abroad and in Germany." "The frank explanation that Prussia merely desires to secure the complete independence of that German territory and its indissoluble union with Germany, must make a tremendous impression in Europe." "If, then," he concludes, "the Duchies could be united, under the sceptre of some German prince, with Germany, Prussia could demand all the political and military guarantees it requires from the new state." The plan of annexing the Duchies to Prussia still seemed to Bernstorff as unattainable. But, on the other hand, he thought a personal union of Schleswig-Holstein with Denmark quite abandoned. "It was Bernstorff's one anxiety," writes Sybel, "lest Denmark might obtain the personal union beloved by Austria!"¹ Bismarck felt with Bernstorff about the necessity of guarding against such an event, but in order to appease Austria he would not openly state his opinions on the question of a personal union, because he wished it to be wrecked by the obstinacy of Denmark. Thus the declaration of Prussia and Austria on May 17th sounded very indefinite. The personal union was not mentioned. Rechberg² has desired this because he feared the unpopularity of it in Germany. An attempt made by the Austrian delegates to hint at it indirectly was skilfully prevented by Bernstorff. But as

¹ Vol. iii., p. 314.

² Count Johann Bernhard Rechberg, Austrian statesman, b. 1806, d. 1899.

only the complete political independence of the Duchies bound by common institution was demanded, the world was left in doubt as to what Prussia and Austria really desired. It seemed at first as if all that had been attained by diplomacy was frustrated. "The effect of the declaration," Bernstorff reports,¹ "was that even the English Ministers, who had just said to me in confidence that they would refrain from demanding the maintenance of the Treaty of London, repeatedly returned to it in yesterday's sitting, as if the question remained just where it was before. The French Ambassador was particularly excited and impatient. He, as well as Baron Brunnow asserted that the meaning of the demands made by the German Great Powers could not be understood, and they did not even know what they were to report to their Courts. Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne said to me:— 'Why have you not asked for the entire separation? Every one expected it. No one wishes the personal union, and you have spoilt all by indirectly reverting to it. If you had required the complete separation we should, as a matter of course, have tried to limit you in your demands as much as possible, but a solution would have been obtained. Now you have provoked the demand made by the neutrals for the administrative separation of the nationalities.'" The French Ambassador would not be talked out of his opinion that a difference of views existed between the German Great Powers. He said to a member of the diplomatic corps, who repeated his remarks to Bernstorff:—"The Prussian plans of annexation spoil all." Bernstorff, in the same despatch, expressed the urgent desire that the German Great Powers should come to an agreement about the conditions of peace. "Without leaving any question in suspense," Austria must be won over to con-

¹ Bernstorff's despatch to the King. London, May 18th, 1864.

sent to the complete separation of the two nationalities. He took much trouble to declare his opinion, and to wipe away the impression produced on the minds of the English Ministers, and to induce them to unite with the neutrals in a compromise based on separation.

Notwithstanding the apparent non-success of the Austro-Prussian declaration, Bismarck's calculations were realized. The Danes, who concluded from the indefiniteness of the declaration that the union between Prussia and Austria was at an end, took fresh courage and rejected the idea of a personal union, thus bringing their fate down on themselves.

During the coming weeks Austria inclined to the side of the Prince of Augustenburg. Rechberg intended to perform a master-stroke by that: the wind of the popular German movement blowing in favour of Schleswig-Holstein was to fill the sails of Austrian policy. Bismarck was at first inclined—as he would not submit his policy to rigid principles—to take up this idea. But he would not make him Duke until the guarantees which Prussia claimed were given to her. In any case, he took care that Prussia gave no binding declarations in favour of the Pretender at the Conference.

The Conference first of all touched upon the division of Schleswig, which England and the neutrals supported. Palmerston wished the Danes to retain at least the Danish speaking and the mixed population, the Schlei and the Dannewerk to be the border line. The Germans were to promise not to build fortresses in the purely German districts which fell to them, and to have no fortified harbours. Bernstorff at once protested against the Schlei frontier when privately informed of the proposal by Lord Russell, and said that the demand that Germany should build no fortresses "was an insult to German honour." He

announced his opposition to the division of Schleswig on May 28th, saying that while concessions might be made in the interest of peace, the proposed frontier could not be accepted. He was quite as firm with the neutral Powers in the preliminary discussions. He demanded Apenrade-Tondern as the frontier, because thousands of Germans would otherwise have to remain under Danish rule. The neutrals at once declared that Germany wished to seize the whole of the mixed district. "Bernstorff declared," writes Sybel,¹ "that it could not be otherwise. After her experiences, Germany could not trust a single German subject to the King of Denmark. Lord Russell protested with tears in his voice, and in the greatest excitement, that such an insulting communication could not be made to the Danes. Bernstorff and Beust said: "Ask the people and you will learn how much Danish feeling there is north of the Schlei." The Austrian Envoy took alarm at these words and protested against any attempt at obtaining the people's vote. For reasons of policy Bernstorff gave way a little, and said that they might perhaps be able to agree to placing the frontier from Flensburg to Tondern, of course, without the fortresses being prohibited, but he was not authorized to propose that frontier.

The dispute about the frontier was resumed at the sitting of the Conference on June 2nd. The Danes were again stubborn, rejecting the Apenrade frontier, as well as that of Flensburg-Tondern. They demanded that of Eckernförde-Friedrichstadt, by which the greater part of Schleswig would have fallen to Denmark. At the same sitting Bernstorff's suggestion of a prolongation of the armistice, which ended on June 12th, was received with arrogant opposition. The Danish delegates declared that it was impossible for them to prejudice the action of their fleet

¹ Sybel, iii., 334.

by accepting the proposal. They acquiesced at last to extending the armistice until June 26th.¹

"Whatever may be the result of next Monday's sitting," writes Bernstorff, "the one great advantage for us has been gained, that if the war recommences it will be about the frontier and not about the constitutional position of the Duchies towards Denmark.² So that the frontier will be quite different if it is drawn now by the neutral Powers favourably inclined towards Denmark. It is in the nature of things, and will, I think, be generally recognized, that if the Danes, in their folly, act in opposition to the urgent advice of the neutrals, war will recommence. Notwithstanding the success at the Conference, Bernstorff deemed a renewal of hostilities undesirable for Prussia. He, therefore, advised that no more should be demanded than was necessary to obtain an honourable result from the war after the sacrifices Prussia had made. "Such a result," he continued in the same despatch, "would, I think, be attained if the yoke which Denmark has hitherto laid upon its German people be removed, and their destiny irrevocably joined to that of Germany. The triumph of carrying this out and having destroyed the Treaty of London remains a victory which Prussia, by her own action, has gained over the Great Powers. Austria must be counted among them, for she has made the greatest difficulties from the beginning, and still continues her opposition to the separation of the nationalities, and to consulting the will of the

¹ According to Theodor von Bernhardi's diary, Bernstorff's two last concessions were not approved in Berlin. Bernstorff considered it unwise to break off negotiations, and he could not act differently. He had, indeed, only given his personal approval to the Apenrade-Tondern line, and the Cabinet were not bound by it. He did not wish to close the discussions on the partition with an absolute refusal, because Prussia would have been accused of having rendered all agreement impossible. (Theodor von Bernhardi, as cited above, vol. vi., p. 125.)

² Bernstorff's despatch to the King. London, June 3rd, 1864.

people, hereby seriously endangering the result of our efforts."

The discussion as to who was the rightful Duke of Schleswig-Holstein became more complicated, as Russia suddenly declared that the House of Gottorp would raise its old claims to the inheritance, after the expiration of the Treaty of London. The Tsar Alexander surrendered these rights to the Grand Duke of Oldenburg. Bismarck had no fear of this candidature creating difficulties. It might, at most, be a new trump card in the diplomatic game. In conversation with the Tsar, then in Berlin, he was immediately convinced that no danger threatened Prussia from that quarter. The Tsar's advice to Denmark to agree to the personal union would not be taken, principally because the Eider Danes, with their well-known obstinacy, rejected such a solution and would willingly abandon all Holstein and a part of Schleswig, if they could retain the greater part of the latter country. Bismarck's tactics for further negotiations at the Congress consisted in constantly reverting to the plan of asking for the vote of the country. Austria, opposed to every plebiscite, refused her concurrence in this clever manœuvre. Thus Bernstorff had to propose on June 18th that the German as well as the Danish districts should be asked to what part of Schleswig they desired to belong at the division of the country. It was not to be a decisive vote, but was only intended to obtain information. With the exception of Beust, no one favoured the proposal, but the real object seemed attained, for the Danes in a rage protested against this, and thus betrayed their fear of this expression of the people's wishes, expecting, indeed, an annihilating verdict against their claims.

The English people were in some measure calmed by the obstinacy of Denmark. Lord Palmerston only escaped

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defeat on June 11th, because he agreed to Kinglake's amendment expressing the satisfaction of the House that he had advised the Queen against armed intervention. The Prime Minister would have liked to make a war-like speech, but he calmly pocketed his humiliation in order to retain office. As Bernstorff asserted from the first, Lord Clarendon, who cherished a silent resentment against Prussia, was much dissatisfied at the circumstances under which Palmerston gained that "victory." Shortly before the decisive vote was given, he had said to Bernstorff at a Court ball: "We are drifting into war just as we did ten years ago," and added: "I cannot, of course, officially declare it to you, but as a friend, I can assure you that so surely as we are now in Buckingham Palace, England will take part in the war if it recommences. You can do what you like on terra firma, but not at sea. You will not get to Copenhagen, nor to the Sound, not even to Alsen."

"When I replied to his last words, especially that Alsen, so to speak, belonged to the terra firma of Schleswig, and that in this statement I could but see the determination of the English Government to make war against us, he persevered in it. He has, as I know, said the same to English friends."

Clarendon recognized the superiority of Prussia to Austria at the Conference. "Since we forced the Austrian delegates," writes Bernstorff to the King, "very much against their wishes, to withdraw from their original standpoint, it is clear at every sitting that in spite of their efforts to be generally agreeable, everything is done according to the intentions of the Prussian delegates, and they have sunk so much in public esteem that Lord Clarendon also remarked at the ball: '*Les Autrichiens ne sont que vos valets!*'"¹

¹ Bernstorff's despatch to the King. London, June 17th, 1864.

Lord Russell's proposal was discussed at the last sitting of the Conference, that Germany and Denmark should turn to a friendly Power to settle the frontier line, which should be placed between the two lines proposed by Germany and Denmark. Lord Clarendon seemed to have the Emperor of the French in mind as the "friendly Power," "for when we remonstrated that this would place him more than ever as the umpire of Europe, Clarendon said that it would be advantageous if the Emperor were umpire, because he would then seriously attempt to put an end to the struggle between Germany and Denmark, which so far, he had not desired."

Bernstorff, of course, did not leave the English statesman in any doubt that such a project was for Prussia and for Germany utterly unacceptable.

That proposal of England was also directed against Germany. Bernstorff declared on June 22nd, with the other German delegates, that they accepted "the last English proposal in the sense of the Peace of Paris, and were willing to choose a mediator who could do good service by aiming at peace without power of a binding judgment."¹ The Danes protested again, and again put themselves in the wrong before Europe, thus evincing their irreconcilability. They also refused to prolong the armistice. The war had to begin afresh, and the diplomatists returned home. After the last sitting Bernstorff sent an interesting despatch to Berlin, from which some extracts are taken:²

"Besides the special report which my colleagues and I are sending to the Minister President about the last sitting of the Conference, I venture to add a few remarks to your Majesty as to the results. I think that I cannot do

¹ Von Sybel, iii., p. 348.

² Bernstorff's despatch to the King. London, June 27th, 1864.

this better than by characterizing these results in their significance for Prussia, and for this object, citing Lord Clarendon's words after yesterday's sitting: 'You entered the Conference as masters of the situation, and you have left it as masters of the situation. How long that will last is another question.' We are far from claiming the merit for ourselves personally, though it is a satisfaction to be able to prove from the words of our chief opponent that the position of Prussia has not suffered from the results of the Conference at which we had the honour to represent your Majesty, and at which we had to struggle against all manner of difficulties, of which no one can have an idea without knowing them well. I go so far as to say that in spite of all obstacles that had to be overcome, your Majesty's Government is more master of the situation than before. The London Treaty has been cancelled, not only by the neutral Powers, but by Austria, who has been obliged to give up the principle of integrity. The union of the two Great Powers, and of Prussia especially, with the rest of the German Confederation has been restored. Austria, much against her will, is forced by your Majesty's Government to keep to the line of national policy, if she does not wish entirely to renounce her position in Germany, to which she has hitherto so obstinately clung. Yes, to-day when the negotiations are broken off and war begins again, a change has come in the position of the Powers that guide the war, in favour of Prussia. Lord Russell asked me after the sitting whether we still had the intention of incorporating the whole of Denmark in the German Confederation. When I expressed my astonishment to hear him speak of such a project, he said that Count Rechberg had spoken of it to the English Minister at Vienna, and that he (Russell) had told me long ago. I at once replied that I had never heard such

an idea mentioned in Prussia. It is sure to be of Austrian origin." Bernstorff described the situation accurately—Austria and Prussia left the Conference masters of the situation. He might well be satisfied with the results, for he had struggled with a zeal, a devotion, an energy for Germany, for Prussia, and especially for the inhabitants of Schleswig-Holstein, which should never be forgotten. He remained true to the national ideal which throughout the whole term of service, he had maintained as the representative of Prussia abroad, and as Minister of Foreign Affairs at home. Even his old opponent, Beust,¹ who was more in sympathy with him at the Conference, dedicated an appreciative word to him in his reminiscences. Some of the extreme Conservatives had thought to offend him by calling him the "Schleswig-Holsteiner," but thanks to his manfully taking up the cause of the oppressed, this had now become an honourable designation. When the final separation of Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark, and above all that of his own old home, Lauenburg, came, after the close of the war, no one could have felt a deeper joy than he at the realization of his youthful ideals. All the annoyances which he had experienced had now vanished from his mind. He had paid no attention to the shafts directed against him, like the valiant Swabian in Uhland's beautiful poem, who let his "shield be spiked with arrows." The English threats of war had meant more to him than to Bismarck, because he saw how weak the English Cabinet was in regard to public opinion, and how easily it could be dragged into war. Without the Queen and her brave,

¹ "Three Quarters of a Century," by Count von Beust, p. 363.

"Count Bernstorff, who as I had various occasions to note, was undervalued by Prussia, displayed at the Conference a very thorough knowledge of the historical side of the question, to the study of which he had been brought by two circumstances, the relations of his family to Denmark, and his own property in the Duchy of Lauenburg."

untiring opposition, matters might have gone differently. But it would be utterly false to designate Bernstorff's warning to his own Government as imaginary. He, who had such a fine feeling for the variations in the mind of the people of England, might be trusted to play the rôle of the trusty Eckart.

That same year Bernstorff had the pleasure of knowing that his native land was united to Prussia. At the preliminaries for peace on August 1st, it had been settled between Austria, Prussia, and Denmark that the latter should relinquish the three Duchies of Schleswig, Holstein, and Lauenburg to the two German Great Powers, pending negotiations at Vienna. On October 21st the Landtag of the Duchy of Lauenburg resolved, at the suggestion of Count Bernstorff-Gyldensteen, to treat with Prussia in regard to the union of the Duchy with Prussia. The deputation that went to Berlin consisted of the Hereditary Marshal of the Province, von Bülow, Burgomaster Dahm-Möllun, and Justice Wittrock. An account of the occurrences at the reception is given in the following papers:—¹

Bismarck to Bernstorff.

"Your Excellency, "BERLIN, *November 1st, 1864.*

"I beg to thank you for your confidential letter which I found on my return with the news about the

¹ Countess Bernstorff writes to her son, Andreas, London, October 23rd, 1864:—"News from Lauenburg sounds very good. The agreement has been accepted that the Lords and Commons express the desire, in consideration of the state of the country, to join Prussia, maintaining their independence as one of the German Duchies. The details of the connection will, first of all, be settled by negotiations with the Prussian Government. They have chosen three deputies to go to Berlin—the Hereditary Marschall von Bülow, the Burgomaster Dahm, and Justice Wittrock. Papa is sending a courier to Berlin to introduce these gentlemen, by desire of the Diet at Ratzeburg. The matter is going on satisfactorily, and I hope they will recognize in Berlin the service your papa has done."

resolution concerning Lauenburg.¹ I beg your Excellency to be assured that his Majesty the King has received with satisfaction your despatch containing the expression of your own great delight.

"I need not assure you that the deputation will be welcome here, and that I shall be prepared to treat with them, and that his Majesty has no objection to receiving them.

"I have only hesitated to instruct Bülow and Wittrock personally as you suggested, as written communications might easily make it appear as though the step of the Lauenburgers were less voluntary than it really is. To retain this character of spontaneity is most necessary. I must, therefore, again beg your Excellency to be the intermediary and beg you to let the gentlemen know that their arrival here will be welcome at any time. All else will be arranged verbally at the interview without difficulty, I hope.

"BISMARCK."

Wittrock to Bernstorff.

"RATZEBURG, November 13th, 1864.

"Will your Excellency allow me to apologize for the hastiness of my letter of the 8th? As I have already written, Herr von Bismarck told us that His Majesty wished to receive us, and the audience took place on Thursday, the 10th, at two p.m. The Minister President was not present, but the adjutant on duty was there. After the Landmarschall had made a short address to the King, His Majesty expressed his satisfaction at the resolution of the Lords and Commons, and declared that if an agreement with Austria should be arranged agreeable to the wishes of the Diet, he would be ready to under-

¹ There is no copy of this among Bernstorff's papers.

take the government of the country, and to support its institutions. The necessary formalities would be settled. The King touched upon the difficulties which the union might meet with in the Prussian Chamber and from outsiders, expressing his hopes of overcoming opposition, and also that no hindrance would arise therefrom. After the King had graciously spoken to each of us, he repeated his pleasure at seeing us, adding: 'I am very glad that your country will be closer to Germany, and especially to Prussia. Pray inform those who sent you of what I have said.' We were dismissed and carried away a most favourable impression that the wishes of the country will be fulfilled in every respect. We had the honour of dining with His Majesty the next day, and Count Bernstorff of Watersen was also there. The King kindly conversed with us before and after dinner, and on leaving said: 'It shall not be my fault if you do not attain your wishes. Farewell.' I talked with Herr von Bismarck again, and he said that there would be special negotiations later on. Herr von Schleinitz said to me that he had just received a letter from your Excellency, and that he was particularly pleased at knowing your wishes concerning the annexation of Lauenburg to Prussia.

"On the 23rd the Diet is to be assembled to hear the report of our Mission, and to decide on some steps concerning the Danish debts and war expenses. I hope, if there is any opposition in the country, that the Diet will retain the upper hand with the people. An opposition could have no material result, and the retention of the Constitution is, thanks to your Excellency's efforts, assured. If Schleswig and Holstein could take the same step, and overcome difficulties, insurmountable as they seem, I would consider this the best solution of the present question, while I cannot regard the proposal as feasible that the

Duchies, with a Sovereign of their own, should be joined to Prussia in military, naval, and diplomatic matters.

“WITTROCK.”

Austria surrendered her portion of Lauenburg to the King of Prussia at the Convention at Gastein for a pecuniary consideration, and he took possession on September 13th, 1865. The formalities were settled by the Government Commissioner, Count Arnim-Boitzenburg, at Ratzeburg. Bernstorff writes to Bismarck immediately after, congratulating him on his appointment as Minister for Lauenburg, and saying that he could not do homage: “As servant and subject of the King of Prussia for thirty-five years, long before I knew that I should ever become a Lauenburg vassal, I took the oath of fealty, so I cannot take it again simply as a subject, thereby implying that I had not been that already. I am, therefore, doubtful whether it would be suitable for me to be present.” He could only appear as a servant of the King, or at the King’s command.¹ The homage took place in the church at Ratzeburg on November 26th, 1865. The Crown Prince sat on the right of the throne, which was placed opposite to the altar, for the King, and Count Bismarck sat on the left. The Constitution of Lauenburg was, in accordance with previous arrangements, left unchanged.² Bernstorff was unable, owing to ill-health, to be present in the King’s suite at the beautiful ceremony.

He wished to represent the Duchy of Lauenburg in the Reichstag of the North German Federation, but only if the

¹ Bismarck Jahrbuch, vi., 182. Bernstorff to Bismarck. September 21st, 1865. Private letter.

² For an account of the ceremony, see an excellent little pamphlet, “A Short History of the Duchy of Lauenburg, with an appendix on the Bishopric of Ratzeburg,” by Dr. S. Kleinwert, after von Kobbe. Published by Karl Hinstorff, Mölln, 1874.

Government deemed it necessary. He writes to Bismarck as to whether it would be useful: "To see men elected to Parliament upon whose co-operation they could count for carrying out their political views." He would have given his whole heart to this. But nothing came of the proposal, though the offer proves the sacrifices Bernstorff would have made for the new German possession, in thus having a seat in the Reichstag, while remaining at his post in London.

CHAPTER XIX

THE WAR OF 1866—THE LUXEMBURG QUESTION—THE NORTH GERMAN FEDERATION—LOUIS NAPOLEON'S PLANS ABOUT BELGIUM

The Convention at Gastein—Lord Russell's Circular Despatch of September 14th, 1865—The General Election in England—Gladstone—The Death of Lord Palmerston—Lord Russell Prime Minister—The end of the Mexican Adventure—Rapprochement between France and Austria—Revival of hatred of Prussia—Bernstorff's warning of an entente between the Western Powers against Prussia—Disunion among politicians in Prussia—Countess Bernstorff's letters during the crisis—The change of public opinion in England after the victories of Prussia—Goltz on his negotiations with Louis Napoleon—Lord Derby's Cabinet—England's policy regarding continental differences—"Great Britain an Asiatic Power"—Peace between Austria and Prussia—The Luxemburg Question—Goltz on the preliminaries of the affair—The London Conference—Interview between the Emperor of Austria and Louis Napoleon at Salzburg—Bernstorff Ambassador for North Germany—Louis Napoleon's plans about Belgium—The Agreement as to the Purchase of the Belgium Railways—The failure of the undertaking—Views of the English Liberals about Louis Napoleon—Bernstorff and English policy.

WITH the close of the London Conference the source from which we have drawn so long is at an end, and Bernstorff's and the Countess's communications become less, the springs flowing with less abundance. The life of this German statesman towards its close can, therefore, be drawn only in outline. Of course his field of labour being in England, it is English policy which now almost exclusively absorbs our interest.

After the Treaty of Gastein on August 29th, 1865, had given Prussia and Austria the joint possession of the Elbe Duchies, constant difficulties on the part of the Western Powers had to be encountered by Prussian statesmen. Louis Napoleon was dissatisfied with the agreement, by which his secret desire for a warlike separation between Austria and her German rivals was postponed, and he distinctly expressed his displeasure and his objections to the agreement in a Circular Letter. Lord Russell's Circular Despatch of September 14th, 1865, supported the Emperor in the name of England, but when no action followed upon the French Circular Letter, Lord Russell also calmly returned his dagger to its sheath. Bernstorff at first believed in the possibility of another joint effort by the Western Powers, but he was soon convinced that the zig-zag course of French statesmanship was not to be depended upon. To see the immediate object which France had in view with any clearness was impossible, because he seems to have received just as little information concerning French and Prussian relations as he had previously in the Dano-German war.

Great changes took place in English policy. The result of the General Election was bad for both Whigs and Tories, while the Radicals, with Gladstone for their leader, had a large numerical increase. Lord Palmerston died in October, 1865. His death was mourned by few, as all parties had lost confidence in him, and his dictatorialness had become unbearable. Lord Russell, who could not compare with Lord Palmerston intellectually, succeeded him as Prime Minister, and Lord Clarendon again accepted the seals of the Foreign Office. Very little change was made in foreign policy under the new régime. The alienation from France became stronger than in the latter part of Lord Palmerston's term of office. The English

became suspicious of Louis Napoleon's political moves, and were delighted when he was unsuccessful in anything, as in the Mexican affair. But this satisfaction was embittered by the rapprochement between the Emperor of the French and Austria, and Prussia was again mentioned with favour in London. Bernstorff concluded from the utterances of leading men, that in the event of an alliance between France and Austria, England would draw to the side of Prussia and Russia. But the kaleidoscope soon changed; anger at Bismarck's policy had been quietly at work in England, and thus the old animosity against Prussia, which had slumbered for a while, suddenly revived. The more the conflict between Prussian and Austrian policy increased, especially after Count Mensdorff succeeded Count Rechberg, the greater was the satisfaction. The speech of the Austrian Cabinet, against Prussia, which took the tone of Prince Schwarzenberg, was approved, and an understanding with France against that "disturber of the world, Prussia," was even spoken of. The French Ambassador in London apparently countenanced this movement. The state of affairs was so strained in March that Bernstorff warned his Government of it. He mentioned Count Mensdorff's rude tone, as well as the ill-feeling in England, and begged his Government not to build too much upon assurances of friendship from France.¹

Bismarck seems to have taken Bernstorff's warning quite ill. In a conversation with Benedetti, among other heated remarks respecting the opposition his policy met with abroad, he mentioned Bernstorff's special despatch, in which he had said that a breach between the two great German Powers would be much regretted in England. Bernstorff had, he said, urgently advised against war, in

¹ Bernstorff's despatch to the King. London, March 6th, 1866.

which Prussia would have all the larger Powers against her.¹ Bismarck added that Goltz at Paris and Redern at St. Petersburg were of the same mind, and wrote in the same strain. And in April he said to Count Barral,² the Italian Minister, that the whole of Prussian diplomacy worked against his project. Bernstorff had gone so far as to write in one of his last despatches that if Italy should enter into an alliance with Prussia it would be disavowed by Louis Napoleon; and Goltz at Paris and Usedom at Florence made the same efforts to hinder the alliance. How he was mistaken as to Bernstorff's objection to an alliance with Italy, a private letter to Goltz on March 17th, proves: "We have real friends nowhere except in Italy; my recognition of it was denounced as a deadly sin by the clever power now ruling, the high Conservatives. I think that this recognition and the Commercial Treaty with France were alike political and most important, and I am the more glad, as they both cost me more trouble than anything else, and have struck Austria most deeply and lastingly, and the Middle States also have been most humiliated by it."

That which seemed doubtful to him in an alliance with Italy, and which, therefore, was what he wished to speak about openly and loyally, was the sad condition of its finances, and the lack of training in the army. He also knew that English policy greatly influenced Victor Emanuel's advisers, and was unfavourable, owing to the hostility against Prussia in England.

If Bernstorff thought the time had not arrived for the differences between Prussia and Austria to be settled by force of arms, it was principally because of the disunion among Prussian statesmen. There were two parties: the

¹ "Mes Illusions," p. 70, Benedetti.

² Barral's despatch, April 7th, 1866.

one for peace with Austria, and the other, under Bismarck, for war. Such disunion was no guarantee for united action. "After my arrival in Berlin," writes Goltz to him on March 26th, "I was worked upon by both parties.¹ . . . One party, Queen Augusta, the Crown Prince and Schleinitz, adjured me in varying degrees of warmth to find a way to avoid war with Austria. Bismarck, whom all his colleagues blindly follow, expected me to encourage the King to go to war." Goltz further said that he had in fact advised war because he recognized that a Bismarck Ministry—just because it has gone so far was made to do nothing but annex the Elbe Duchies, even though it meant war to do so. "The King's mood was fairly peaceful, but it gradually became warlike during my stay in Berlin. He did not wish to go to war for the Duchies, but he had become convinced that Austria had not only injured his rights there and his honour, but that it had allied herself with the revolutionary movement." The nearer loomed the war between Prussia and Austria and her allies, the more heated became public opinion in England. Bernstorff could say of himself again, as he had at the time of the war with Denmark, that he "stood in the midst of an enemy's country." But his belief in the strength of Prussia grew in proportion. He had felt bound to sound a note of warning before the threatening danger, but now that the die was cast, he warmly defended Bismarck's policy both to the English Government and in society. A characteristic picture of the feeling of the English towards Prussia and the moral suffering endured by Bernstorff and his family, we find in numerous letters from the Countess to her son Andreas at Berlin. She expresses her confidence in the success of Prussia, although her relations at home, who were in sympathy with Austria,

¹ Goltz to Bernstorff. Paris, March 26th, 1866.

gave her pessimistic news. The past rises vividly before the mind on reading these letters :—

“March 10th. Things look very black here. The small diplomats eagerly desire Bismarck’s dismissal, which is, according to them, the only solution of the situation. It amuses me to tell them that Bismarck will never give up his post, and will stand fast by the King. They then even propose that the King should abdicate!”

“March 31st. We are greatly absorbed by all that is happening in Germany. Will there be war or not? Papa is restless and in feverish activity. I believe he sees things too much *en noir*. My hopes are for peace, but if there should be war, I think we have good chances of success. That which I am most afraid of is a giving way on our side at the last moment, as on so many former occasions. I have great anxiety on that account lest Bismarck might leave his post. He certainly will not give way, but it is possible that the King may yield to his family.”

“April 4th. Our relations towards Austria are untenable. All in all, I do not consider our position so bad. France is dangerous, as she always has been and always will be—we have to reckon on that. But all else is in our favour. I am sure Bismarck will not go; I hope no one in Berlin thinks of it, and that the report was only circulated by the anti-Prussian set. It is a great comfort to me that a man such as Bismarck is Minister now.”

“April 13th. The King holds firmly by Bismarck. I pity the poor King, who is very much worked upon by his family in political affairs, but he cannot sacrifice Bismarck, nor alter his policy now. In spite of my small sympathy for the war, I find the possession of Holstein sufficiently important to justify fighting. It appears that the King would sooner abdicate than renounce it. . . . I cannot comprehend how the members of the Royal Family can wish for Bismarck’s

resignation under these circumstances, even if they do not like him."

"April 18th. May God preserve Bismarck's health. I hope that justice will be done to us later on. Everything that is wrong is ascribed to us now. We may say as much as we like that Austria took the initial step. English people keep on saying: 'Austria does not wish war; you do.' The desire for Bismarck's dismissal is heard on all sides, though he is spoken of in such flattering terms, as: 'He is a very clever fellow. I will not say what he is, but he is the cleverest!' Baillie Cochrane said to me yesterday: 'All my sympathies are for Austria, but I cannot help admiring Bismarck.' I do not yet believe in the war, at least, not while Austria is unprepared for it. They say here in England: 'Bismarck is so clever you will see that he will force Austria to begin.'"

"April 21st. News from Berlin is more pacific to-day. People in London do not believe in the war, and do not wish it. The 'Times' blames Austria for recalling Carolyi.¹ You cannot imagine how unpleasant our position is. All sorts of reports are circulated to disquiet us, as for instance:—The King does not wish for war; he does not, of course, wish to let Bismarck go, but he will go with him; that the spirit of the Prussian troops is bad. One really does not know what to say."

"People are much excited against our Government, but very amiably disposed towards us personally. Baillie Cochrane said to me yesterday: 'What a blessing for Prussia that you are here. They would not look at any other Prussian here.' The 'Times' is mistaken; Carolyi is not recalled."

"May 16th. Papa sees everything black. Our position

¹ Count Aloys Karolyi, Austrian statesman, b. 1825, d. 1889; Plenipotentiary at the Congress of Berlin.

is not easy. And at this excited time I am to bring These out! You can form no idea of all the various opinions. One person cries up Bismarck to the skies; another declares he will bring us to utter ruin. One says that the King is profoundly troubled, and in the end will not allow war to begin; and others assert that Austria will give way. . . . It is a dreadful muddle."

"May 19th. The attempt on Bismarck's life, of which the Foreign Office and Rothschild have received news, formed the subject of conversation at our rout. The day after, papa received a telegram from Bismarck himself announcing the fact. We both congratulated him, and he sent us his warmest thanks. An incredible number of people came to our rout; it was so crowded that I was almost embarrassed. People could scarcely go up and down stairs. It almost gave an impression of a demonstration for us, so we ought really to rejoice at it. Apponyi came, looking very anxious."

"May 20th. We dined at Lord Chelmsford's yesterday with the Duke of Cambridge. Notwithstanding Lord Derby's and Lord Chelmsford's agreeability, it was rather gloomy. With my acute hearing I heard quite distinctly the Duke growling about us, (Prussia), especially, and about events in general. I heard the words: 'The war is shocking; it is our conduct of two years ago.' Lord Derby must also be greatly irritated against us, for he avoided all political subjects. We may say what we like about Bismarck; we shall never convert people here. You know, indeed, what the English are, and how they can hate, as well as love."

"June 16th. We are, of course, greatly delighted with the success of our troops. Bismarck's skill, energy, and expedition are admired here. I became ill from excitement, and nearly had an attack of gastric fever, and could see

no one. I suppose, however, that the diplomats are disconcerted. Ah, if Providence will but grant us a speedy and brilliant victory over the Federation and over Austria, that would be glorious. It would make an end of the war soon and place us at the head of North Germany."

"June 24th. You cannot imagine, my dear child, with what impatience we are waiting news from you. Although people are not friendly towards Prussia, our success surprises every one. . . . The 'Times' considers peace possible on the ground of a separation in Germany. 'Prussia,' it writes, 'should have the north and Austria the south.'"

In these days Bernstorff received an autograph letter from the King, which clearly shows the difficulties of the situation in spite of the great delight he felt at the victory:—

King Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

"*PARDUBITZ, July 9th, 1866.*

"A thousand thanks for your letter and despatch, with your congratulations. Public opinion about us, even in England, seems to be improving, but unfortunately, not in the Royal Family, where the Augustenburg-Danish influences prevail; although they are really opposed to each other. . . . The Venetian episode is a difficult matter for diplomacy. Such a thing, out of hatred of Austria towards Prussia, one never saw; they cede a hitherto firmly held country after a victory in order to be able to act against Prussia with increased power. And here Austria comes forward with conditions for an armistice, as if she had been victorious.

"My best remembrances to your wife,

"Your

"WILHELM."

A letter from the Countess explains the animosities of the individual members of the English Royal Family, to which the King's letter alludes:—

"July 18th. The 'Times' is now decidedly for us, and public opinion has improved in our favour very much. Society begins to think our success fine, but they do not congratulate us much, only in secret on account of the Court, which is in favour of Austria, I do not know why the diplomats are not very friendly, but so it is now; as the Duke of Sutherland says:—'It is quite immaterial what people say or think now; nobody cares for England.' They are quite satisfied with the annexation of the smaller states, and will calm down about Hanover also, except the Cambridges."

Bernstorff, who had suffered keenly about the animosity of the English before the war, was now quite happy. He saw in the victories of Prussia an expiation of all the wrongs which Schwarzenberg had inflicted for forty years. He expresses his delight at Bismarck's policy in a letter to Goltz:—

Count Bernstorff to Count von der Goltz.

"BRIGHTON, August 25th, 1866.

"Events have been so rapid and overwhelming that one hardly has time for correspondence, and this has been the case as regards you. Still, I have missed the exchange of thought with you, and I would be very glad if you would write to me, especially as they are more chary of communications from Berlin than ever, except those that can be conveyed by telegram. Thus during the war and for several months before I did not receive any of your despatches. Our chief, Werther, to whom I complained, replied that the despatches went off immediately to Nicolsburg, without anyone having had time to copy them, and

there remained. Of the whole episode about compensation, about which I made many reports, and telegraphed a good deal, not a word has been said to me from Berlin, and only one single telegram in reference to your audience on the 11th.

"The Paris correspondent of the 'Globe' stated yesterday that another note had gone to Benedetti, which reserved the question for the future, and that the preparations of the French army were being vigorously carried on. Is that true? I am not troubled about it. Everything has providentially gone so favourably for us that a war with France will not check our greatness, but may, perhaps, hasten it. It may be necessary to make a complete work out of an incomplete one; still purposely left incomplete by Bismarck. I must confess that I cannot approve of this incompleteness, much as I recognize the energy and skill of our policy. It may, indeed, be wiser not to do all at once, but it might become a very unsatisfactory and melancholy definite solution, and who knows whether such favourable circumstances will again be offered, and whether the same energy and skill will then guide our affairs? It would have been a clearing up, and it is regrettable that divers agreements hindered us from finishing the work."

Immediately after the war Bernstorff received an extremely interesting letter from Goltz about affairs in Paris. The negotiations with Louis Napoleon have been told in recent history. Goltz had the undoubted merit of having calmed the French Emperor's annoyance at the opposition to his pretensions to act as mediator in the German struggle, and of having made him amenable in respect to the annexations which Prussia desired. The letter is dated August 28th, and recapitulates the events in Paris, as well as Goltz's own part in them, from July 4th. On that day telegrams were sent to King Wilhelm

and to Victor Emanuel by the Emperor of the French concerning intervention in the cause of peace and the armistice. Louis Napoleon's Note in the "Moniteur" of July 5th announced the surrender of Venice to France by Austria, as well as Austria's request for his mediation. The French despatch had been received at the Prussian headquarters on the same day. While accepting in principle the French proposal, an evasive answer was given without any promises as to an armistice. This was the situation in which the negotiations began which Goltz relates :—

Count von der Goltz to Count Bernstorff.

"PARIS, August 28th, 1866.

"Meanwhile I will recapitulate as shortly as possible. The 4th of July was, of course, an unpleasant surprise for me. I adhered to what had been at first omitted at headquarters, so that we could not conclude an armistice without the guarantee of a good peace. I found this guarantee in the Emperor's conditions to Vienna, which were acceptable to us, coupled with the threat, in case of refusal, to withdraw his hand from Austria, and to return the gift of Venice. Before I definitely insisted on this we went through a crisis of several days, during which we were threatened with the armed mediation of France, that is, intervention directed against us. All circumstances here were upside down, my friends became my enemies, and vice versa. I won the victory by the help of Prince Napoleon, Rouhers, and Lavalette over the Empress, Drouyn de L'huys, Walewski, the entire party in the Senate, the masked Orleanists, etc. I only wished the Emperor to inform us of his basis for intervention, while he desired to know our conditions of peace, which, on account of the difficulty of communicating with headquarters, was not possible. There, they wished to gain time; they said they could do nothing

without Italy, and Italy again referred to us. They sent Reuss with an important letter without any proposals for peace, and with orders to report about the battle of Königgrätz, of which they knew more here than was agreeable. This made bad blood and threatened a dangerous crisis. I received a despatch on the 12th from Pardubitz, dated 8th, in which Bismarck, unauthorized by the King, stated his own view provisionally as to the conditions of peace which we should present. This despatch was partly reversed by later telegrams, announcing a growing appetite at every halting-place. But it was serviceable to begin a confidential conversation with the Emperor about the conditions for peace which I deemed attainable. That first despatch was very moderate in its demands; the project for reforming the Federation, the war expenses, the annexation of Ostfriesland, of the Bautzen district, the reversionary succession of Brunswick, the abdication of the King of Hanover and of the Elector of Hesse, a small strip of Bohemia and of Austrian Silesia, the Hungarian Constitution, Schleswig-Holstein, as well as a bit of Hesse. This despatch limited itself to the annexation of the countries already occupied, which was to be demanded, but only insisted upon it if it could be obtained without a compensation to be accorded to France. The telegrams went further and demanded, if possible, Electoral Hesse, and either half of Hanover, half of Saxony, or the whole of one of these countries, or possibly Hanover.

“The increasing anxiety of Louis Napoleon at the deep humiliation to which he would have been exposed after proclaiming the mediation, intervention, etc., by our continued advance and the taking of Vienna made the matter easier for me. This with the inconsistency of his position in regard to his past policy of a war against Prussia and Italy.

"I declined his proposition for us to give up our demand for the total exclusion of Austria from the Federation; I also induced him to abandon his various proposals, of two Parliaments, two Federal Assemblies, the entrance of Saxony into the South German Federation, and the gift of the Rhine Province to Saxony. His chief anxiety was about the relative weakness of the South German group, and therefore, the inevitable absorption of all Germany by Prussia. I tried to reassure him by giving a veto to the South German group, and by the offer to secure by a treaty the rights of the latter, but this did not quite satisfy him. I promised to consider a form which should satisfy both parties. He declared that annexation within North Germany was neither his concern nor that of Austria. Though he desired a Constitution for Bavaria, he did not think it correct to make any such recommendation to an independent state. Finally, he expressed a wish to see the programme which we had discussed committed to paper. I at once offered to write it, so as to avoid Drouyn de L'huys doing it. On the following morning I brought him my draft. My plan greatly reassured him: on one side to give the South German Federation an 'existence internationale indépendante,' on the other to leave the forming of the 'liens nationaux' between the North and South German Federations to the voluntary decision of both. He accepted the whole 'tel quel,' adding the allusion to the 'intégrité de l'empire autrichien sauf la Vénétie,' which, however, is not to exclude the rectification of the frontier as compensation for war expenses; and instead of the words: 'Les frais de guerre,' 'une partie des frais de guerre.' As I could not in the paragraph on the North German Federation say anything about the annexation (for they had not come to a definite decision at Nikolsburg), and I

did not wish to ask either too much or too little, I expressly gave him to understand that these annexations in North Germany were not excluded from being 'considérées vis-à-vis de l'Autriche comme affaire intérieure.' My draft went off unaltered to Vienna and Nikolsburg as the French proposal. But there they were only accepted as sufficient for an armistice, not as a basis for peace, because the annexations were not definitely named. We set no value on the exclusion of Austria, as it was out already! South Germany was all one to us, and I might have boldly conceded two Parliaments; *but the important thing for us was the four million subjects to be annexed to North Germany immediately.* The Emperor Louis Napoleon must guarantee them to us. Then I was threatened with the King's intentions of abdicating! So strongly did he wish for the annexations. I succeeded without any difficulty with these demands on the Emperor. He declared himself willing for the annexation of Hanover, Electoral Hesse, and Upper Hesse; of Nassau and Frankfurt there was nothing said then, and he desired that the existence of the Kingdom of Saxony, not its integrity, should be preserved. This did not prevent him from consenting to the annexation of Leipzig and the Bautzen district. Thus we had gained both points, the federative system with the exclusion of a portion of Germany and the annexations.

"I repeatedly urged upon the Emperor the compensation question; indeed, I even pressed him once or twice as to whether he thought it would be dangerous for the equilibrium of France, in which case he must either urge the reduction of our demands, or formulate demands for compensation. After many waverings for and against, he finally said it was best to claim nothing. Only at the last conversation about the annexation of four millions he

hinted at wishes which made me fear that eventually an apothecary's bill will follow.

"And in fact, a telegram was sent the next day without my knowledge to Benedetti, in which the demand for the frontier of 1814 and Luxemburg was made. Immediately before the signature of the preliminaries took place, Benedetti had a private conversation with Bismarck, who, as he reported, 'accepta la conversation.' Meanwhile, Bismarck gave the subject no official importance, as Benedetti was not authorized to make a written or official communication, and Bismarck evidently did not wish to disturb the signing of the preliminaries of peace. The report of Benedetti, which on the whole must have been encouraging, had not come to hand here, and I knew nothing of the whole affair when I saw the Emperor the evening before he left for Vichy on the 27th. He asked me quite modestly whether I thought he could ask for Luxemburg and Landau when matters were settled, as he wished for a strategical frontier of defence for France. I replied that I considered both, especially Luxemburg, not quite impossible. Of Saarlouis, Saarbrücken, and the piece of Belgium he said nothing. The demands formulated by Drouyn de L'huys at Vichy arrived on the 29th, and they comprised Rhenish Bavaria and Rhenish Hesse, including Mainz.

"As Benedetti had left Nikolsburg, he only received the despatch in Berlin, whence he sent the astonishing letter to Bismarck on the 5th. Meantime I knew nothing, and was puzzled why Bismarck should desire a speedy answer to a telegram of the 25th (which had been detained a week), according to which I was to demand the official recognition of the annexation, and the non-reception of the Ministers of the deposed Princes. The riddle was solved when the answer arrived from Vichy, that

they would declare themselves on receiving the answer to the demands for compensation. These had naturally created a bad impression in Berlin. I was ordered to confer personally with the Emperor. He had returned very ill from Vichy, and could not immediately receive me; meanwhile, I had a very lively scene with Drouyn de L'huys, who threatened me with his resignation if the Emperor again yielded to me. You know that the latter did this on the 11th, and almost without a struggle. I regret that Reuter's office has been enabled to communicate the circumstances fairly correctly, whereby the Emperor is publicly compromised, and my influence with him may be shaken. He was very much displeased at the publication of the affair; the indiscretions were committed, I think, here and in Berlin.

"We agreed to contradict the statements and to continue our friendly conversations as to what could be done in order to reconcile public opinion in France to an extension of Prussia. Benedetti, unknown to Drouyn de L'huys, was authorized to do this. The latter was informed by letter by the Emperor, after Benedetti and Lavalette had declined to accept the portfolio, of the result of his conversation with me. Louis Napoleon had, at the same time, commanded him to send the reply to Lord Cowley's letter, which doubtless you know, and all this Drouyn de L'huys had obediently done. Benedetti carried out his mandate most clumsily. I tell you this in strict confidence. He became impudent, Bismarck nervous; in short, they seem to stand towards each other like cat and dog. I have again tried to set matters straight with Louis Napoleon, and he has reprimanded Benedetti, but the negotiations promise no better result. Our King evidently will not consent to any concessions, and Bismarck is glad to cite Benedetti's impertinence, so as not to realize the hopes which he had raised.

"I regret this, without being in the least anxious as to the issue of a war between us and France. *The Emperor is the only reasonable person in this country.* If he does not entirely renounce the demands for compensation, he only does so on pressure from all sides, coming especially from parties hostile to him. Our brilliant victory has developed matters. His policy, in the eyes of France, has been most foolish. If he obtains nothing from us now, his throne, or at all events his son's, will be shaken. Every other Government that follows will be more dangerous for us than his, and I should, therefore, like to bring him, in our own interest, out of this dilemma. Prussian and real German territory we cannot give him, but we might give him, as payment on account, Luxemburg and a future claim on Belgium. As price for both, we should ask the frontier line of Meuse, and a free hand in South Germany. France has through the preliminaries obtained a sort of veto, and a right of intervention in German affairs, while we cannot know when we may be forced to extend our rule over South Germany. I should like to get rid of this state of things. A war against France would, of course, unite Germany. But in my judgment, the time has not come for it. We must first firmly organize North Germany, otherwise we destroy our work by drawing in South German elements, which, combined with the North German democracy, would make every parliamentary government impossible.

"Now to reply to your question. The Emperor has not taken the last sacrament; he is much better; but I should not like to guarantee his life for long. His special sufferings I do not know, statements are contradictory, but it is of a chronic and grave nature. He is horribly run down, especially his nerves, and morally.

"The Empress goes to Biarritz between the first and

third, and the Emperor a week later. I also hope to go there, as we shall only have the Saxon difficulties. I therefore wrote to Berlin yesterday, and hope to be able to get leave towards the 6th.

“With kind regards, etc.,

“GOLTZ.”

“P.S.—The Emperor is firmly resolved not to fall out with us, and the military also recognize that they could not begin war with us under six months. Then comes the exhibition, and all may be forgotten by that time, though the contest with the Corps Legislatif may be very stiff.”¹

The defeat of the English Government on the Reform Bill in June led to a change of the Cabinet. In the new one, formed by Lord Derby, Disraeli became Chancellor of the Exchequer, Spencer Walpole had the Home Office, and Lord Stanley, Lord Derby's eldest son, became Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. This last office Lord Malmesbury was to have filled, but he was obliged to decline it owing to ill-health. He accepted the Great Seal. The new Cabinet maintained much reserve in regard to continental affairs. England had no desire to be mixed up in the ‘squabbles of the continent.’ Great Britain, it was said, withdrew to her own place as a sea-power. Disraeli even stated, under general approval,

¹ In a later letter to Bernstorff, dated Paris, February 22nd, 1867, Goltz took credit to himself in that his service had brought about the peace. Without his co-operation, Bismarck would not have been able to attain what he did. “The peace is my work, not his. I have succeeded in obtaining ten times what was demanded ten days after the Battle of Königgrätz, when only Bautzen and Ostfriesland were asked for at headquarters. I have refused all compensation, which Bismarck readily gave in to at Nikolsburg.” At the close of his letter he complains of lack of recognition of his services at Berlin.

that England was not a European, but an Asiatic Power. When the Austro-Prussian peace negotiations were being carried on and the question came up whether France might not demand some compensation at the expense of Belgium, the tone in England became nervous, and Louis Napoleon had to make tranquillizing explanations. Just when Bismarck wished to end the negotiations with Benedetti concerning the Belgium annexation, a telegram, according to Sybel, arrived from Count Bernstorff, wherein it was stated that Lord Stanley had told him that Louis Napoleon's explanations regarding the safety of Belgium were, in every respect, reassuring. Bismarck, therefore, at Benedetti's desire, took the draft of the agreement noted down by Benedetti on August 28th, concerning the annexation of a portion of Belgium by France, and surprised the Minister by the question whether Louis Napoleon would make use of the transaction to sow discord between Prussia and England.¹ Benedetti wrote in much annoyance about the affair to Paris, that it was impossible to deal confidentially with such people. As Manteuffel had just then been sent by the King to St. Petersburg, he at once inferred that Bismarck did not desire to go on with an alliance with France because he had already made arrangements with Russia.

Sybel further states: "Count Bernstorff announced on September 5th that 'Lord Clarendon said to me in his irritable way that Prussia had advised Louis Napoleon to seek compensation from Belgium, but that such advice had been declined in moral indignation. . . . It appears,' continued Bernstorff, 'that Louis Napoleon, in order to recommend himself here, spreads this sort of news,'"² On September 19th Baron Brunnow wrote to Gortschakoff: "Belgium is anxious concerning its integrity. Louis Napo-

¹ Sybel, v., 411.

² Sybel, v., 412.

leon has given the most satisfactory assurances on the subject in London, but who believes in them?" Prussia had been represented as the tempter. In reality Prussia did not at all desire to play such a rôle. Bismarck only threw out the idea of compensation for France in Belgium in order to prolong the negotiations, and in the meanwhile, vigorously to carry out the peace negotiations with Austria. The high stake was won. After the difficulties between Austria and Italy had been settled, peace was concluded, which put an end to all hopes of France obtaining an increase of territory on her eastern frontier, and at the same time the danger of Russian intervention was at an end. Public opinion calmed down when the annexation question regarding Belgium was settled, and indifference to continental political affairs ensued. Antwerp and Constantinople were the only places on the continent which were of the slightest interest, according to Disraeli. He, as Bernstorff heard, had made similar statements during the war, in reply to the demands of the smaller German diplomats that England should seize the arm of Prussia. Queen Victoria, as the Saxon Minister, Count Vitzthum, writes, was much troubled about events, but comforted herself in that the Prince Consort had prophesied it all.¹ Lord Russell entirely changed his views, and became a passionate admirer of Bismarck.

The warlike events of 1866, as well as the formation of the North German Federation, was greeted with enthusiasm by the majority of Germans in the north. Here and

¹ The account which Vitzthum gives in his work, "London, Gastein, Sadowa," pp. 259, 304-12, of his conversations with Bernstorff after the decision of 1866, has not been taken into consideration here, because the authenticity of the letter is not proved. Vitzthum had turned for help to Bernstorff for his King, and begged his intervention in favour of the independence of the Kingdom of Saxony in the Federation. Whether Bernstorff really attempted this intervention is not known for certain.

there, of course, voices were raised prophesying evil from the new creation, and the beginning of the "decline" of the German nation because of its division in "three parts." In South Germany especially, the Particularists emulated the Democrats and Clericals, in decrying Prussia, which had "destroyed the German Empire." Among Bernstorff's relations and acquaintances some cherished pessimistic views, and he tried with patriotic enthusiasm to convert these doubters both by letter and by personal influence. He writes as follows to his brother Hermann, who was dissatisfied at the state of affairs :—

Count Bernstorff to his brother Hermann.

"LONDON, *January 18th*, 1867.

"I have been riding with my boys of late, who brought their ponies from school. They return to school to-morrow. Andreas was at home for six weeks, and is now in Berlin after having recovered from an attack of sore-throat. . . .

"If you, dear brother, believe that Germany is weakened by the great events of the past year, I should only like you to spend twenty-four hours in London, Paris, or St. Petersburg, where you would soon be of another opinion. Germany has never been so strong since the Peace of Westphalia, nor so respected and feared, and a more striking proof of this cannot be given than in the rage of the French, and the enormous army they think they must keep in future. I consider it perfectly just that all German States which profit by the safety of this new connection, and in the respect which we inspire abroad, should also share in the sacrifices and burdens which it involves. I have always felt it to be a crying wrong that Prussia had to bear this burden for all Germany alone, especially for North Germany, yet never once receiving any gratitude, but only hatred and

scorn. The value of the little Federated contingent in South and West Germany can now, after the war, be appreciated. Just imagine what would have happened, if instead of Prussia, a French army had overrun the whole of Germany. What would have become of us Germans then? Now let them come! They will take care not to increase the unity and strength of Germany by an unjust attack.

"I find it too much to expect that Prussia should thank the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg for studying his real interests and going with the stronger side, instead of giving himself over to the fate that has befallen our enemies. Nor can I see the humiliation in the future position towards the chief of the Confederation or the Empire, for legitimately, no other position was due to the little Princes of the Empire. The dissolution of the Empire was but the result of the weakness of its rulers and the strength of a foreign conqueror, who was the offspring of the Revolution."

"P.S.—I have just got to-day's 'Saturday Review,' the best of the English weeklies, and very favourably inclined to Germany. I enclose the first article, 'North Germany,' and translate the passages which I have marked, because they so wonderfully confirm what I have been saying:—

"'But if all this is mysterious and humiliating for France, nothing could be brighter and more glorious for Germany than the whole occurrence. Count Bismarck has shown Germany what it can be. The second Napoleon thundered at him and he was not frightened; he determinedly declined to surrender even one inch of German territory. Continental Europe awakes to the delightful conviction that it cannot be overthrown any more by the volition of one man, and that a Power has arisen which Imperial France is afraid of attacking.'

"I believe that foreigners have a clearer and more unprejudiced opinion than those Germans who, for the time

being, suffer, or think they suffer, financially and in other respects, under the changed régime.

"I should feel the same if I were a Mecklenburger. A Lauenburger, Hessian, and, indeed, a Hanoverian patriotism is utterly incomprehensible to me, and I have never known any other patriotism than German patriotism. I understand a Prussian patriotism because it has an independent and glorious history, but I cannot separate it from German patriotism. And the stronger and more passionately this has been felt by me all my life, the greater and more unshakably do I feel the other, because history shows as clear as day to those who will open their eyes, that only through Prussia can Germany become powerful, honoured, and respected among the nations of the world. When one has lived abroad, dearest Hermann, for over thirty years, one knows what it is to belong to a great and glorious nation, indeed, to the first nation in the world, and yet, at every step, to feel bitterly that this politically castrated nation, as Lord Clarendon once said to me, was of all nations, large or small, the least respected because of its weakness and want of understanding in political questions. In Mecklenburg one does not feel that as one does in London, Paris, or St. Petersburg. Thank God, that has passed, and that I have lived to see this day."

After these two letters, we place a third, although it belongs to a later period. It again shows us how, in the midst of all the political whirl and struggle, family life remained for Bernstorff the secure haven in which he found comfort and peace. It also proves how true is the opinion expressed by Beust in his "Reminiscences" that he was a most devoted father. His wife was, in these years, a self-sacrificing, domestic co-worker, although she was often suffering in health, and his best support through her living

interest in his public work. Now that work had been crowned with success, he appreciated greatly the blessing his family life had been to him. The following letter is written by one whose heart was full of deep, prayerful gratitude.

Count Bernstorff to his brother Hermann

"LONDON, December 29th, 1867.

"Since I last wrote to you I have received my credentials as Ambassador for North Germany, though I do not cease being Prussian Ambassador; I am now doubly the King's Ambassador, for Prussia as well as for the North German Confederation. . . .

"We went to the Holy Communion to-day, and, as we sat in church with our five eldest children round us, the sixth playing with his toys at home, I thought that the joy which I experienced this day twenty-nine years ago might, if that were possible, have been even greater than it was, if I could have looked into a magic mirror, on that, the happiest day of my life, and have seen us two sitting here, after so many years, contented and happy, and surrounded by half a dozen good and pretty children."

It was still thought in Paris after the Peace that the Prussian Government would agree to give some compensation to France. Louis Napoleon endeavouring to obtain it, recurred to his old plan about Luxemburg again. There is, unfortunately, nothing in Bernstorff's papers in reference to these negotiations which kept Europe in a state of suspense for some time. But he certainly had a difficult and responsible task at the Conference which was held in London at the suggestion of the Tsar Alexander.

The English Government violently opposed the Conference at first. Lord Stanley would have preferred the

surrender of Luxemburg to France, so he informed the French Ambassador of this, his private opinion. Strangely enough, this announcement was made just when the King-Grand Duke had withdrawn his consent with regard to Prussia's opposition. Stanley did not desire a Conference before a firm basis, for an understanding, as he said, had been found for both disputants. Bismarck was not inclined to bind himself, but afterwards he informed Lord Augustus Loftus of his readiness to accept an arrangement on honourable conditions. He proposed that Holland should appeal to the European Powers, and invite them to attend a Conference. It was impossible for Prussia to accept a basis for an understanding before the Conference, or to make concessions while, at the Conference, she could make them to Europe and to Holland. Bismarck finally approved of the conditions proposed by Russia: the evacuation of the fortresses and the neutralization of the country under the guarantee of Europe, but only after he had assured himself that Louis Napoleon agreed to this guarantee.

But England suddenly opposed with all her power the securities demanded by Europe. The first draft of an agreement sent by Lord Stanley to the Powers on May 3rd, proposing the withdrawal of the Prussian troops and the closing of the fortress, as well as forbidding the Grand Duke to surrender the town to any other Power, did not contain this point. The English Secretary of State wished to take a middle course when opposed by France and Prussia; Luxemburg should be declared neutral in perpetuity by the Great Powers, and a promise should be obtained from them to respect this neutrality. Bernstorff had to communicate to the English Cabinet on May 7th an official despatch that such a general agreement was no equivalent for the guarantee of Europe, and that he was not permitted

to take part in the Conference unless England agreed to this condition. At last Baron Brunnow's proposal that, instead of a declaration by each separate Power, they should "collectively give a European guarantee," by a united decision of the Great Powers, put an end to England's refusal. To Bernstorff's inquiry by telegram, an answer came from Berlin agreeing to this. He then defended this suggestion of a collective guarantee, at the Conference, in the most courageous manner against all the objections of the English Government.¹

His opinion prevailed, and thereby he obtained a practical result from the Conference. As to the other points—the evacuation immediately after the exchange of the ratification, the razing of the fortresses, etc., it was easier to come to an agreement.

After this adjustment of the threatened disturbance, Europe breathed again. All the world made the pilgrimage to the great Exhibition in comfort, Imperial Paris showing up in great brilliancy. Two dark clouds fell upon the festivities—the attempt on the life of the Tsar, Alexander II., when he was in Paris, by the Pole, Berezowski, and the terrible final tragedy in Mexico. Bernstorff was not able to visit the Exhibition as he had intended, and his leave, spent in Germany, was abruptly stopped, because Bismarck became nervous at Katte's "unsatisfactory conduct of affairs in London." During

¹ Stanley considered that Luxemburg was already under the guarantee of Europe by the agreement of 1839. Bernstorff replied to him: "To be sure the possession of the country is secured to the King-Grand Duke by Europe, but in no way its neutrality, which is a different thing from the guarantee accorded to Belgium. . . ." To Article II., which settled the future neutralization of Luxemburg, Bernstorff contributed the addition: "This principle of neutrality remains under the protection of a collective guarantee of the signatories of this Treaty." All Ambassadors, with the exception of the English, agreed. Only at the second sitting, on May 9th, did Lord Stanley agree to Bernstorff's suggestion. Sybel, vi., 171, 172.

his stay in Germany he had the pleasure of witnessing the display of national pride evoked by Louis Napoleon's attempted intervention between Prussia and Denmark in respect to Article V. of the Peace of Prague. The time when foreigners could meddle in German concerns was drawing to an end, as he felt in the depth of his heart.

Bernstorff followed the eventful proceedings in the world's theatre with the profoundest interest. Ever since Louis Napoleon's meeting with Franz Joseph at Salzburg, and the rapprochement of France and Italy, he saw the day approaching when France would try to overcome her own difficulties by an attack on Germany. He held strongly to his conviction that the English and Germans were predestined to act in unison against France. But this view was not as yet heeded in London.

When Disraeli had assumed the rudder of state after Lord Derby's illness on February 24th, 1868, the feeling in England towards Prussia was worse. "Disraeli," Bernstorff writes to Bismarck on March 6th, "assured me that I might say in my despatch to-day that the Government would make no change in England's foreign policy, and after I had explained that all rumours of alliances sought by us which could endanger the peace were inventions and nonsense, and that all we desired was to be left in peace and quiet to consolidate our own Prussian and German affairs, and that I thought that England would have the same interest in this respect as ourselves, in desiring a strong German Power as a balance against other continental Powers, he said: 'Yes, certainly we do not wish Prussia to be disturbed in her digestion,' and laughingly continued: 'Tell Count Bismarck that we do not wish to disturb her in her digestion.' Notwithstanding this kind wish and manner of speaking, we must not deceive ourselves. Disraeli is undoubtedly drawn towards

France, as, unfortunately, are nearly all modern statesmen in England; the greater part of them, because they know incredibly little about Germany, and France, the only Power which could be dangerous for them, lies near, and Paris has charm and prestige for them."¹

The only real pleasure which Bernstorff experienced at this time was the increased esteem for Prussia, and with it, for all Germany, since the formation of the North German Federation. His personal position was also distinctly improved. He felt some difficulty as to external forms in his new functions. His letter to Goltz on this matter is worth notice, because it is probably an expression of the feeling of most Prussian Ministers of that day.²

Count Bernstorff to Count Goltz.

"LONDON, *March 10th*, 1868.

"We have been on the most friendly footing with the new Premier for some years, and are in the kindest relations. Notwithstanding this, I do not deceive myself as to his sympathies for France and his friendly connection with Louis Napoleon. The best guarantee to me is that Stanley remains, and confirms Dizzy's assurances that there will be no change in foreign policy.

"Our present relations are as good as possible. . . .

"Since we last exchanged letters, we have become somewhat amphibious, which makes it possible to serve two masters, or, at least, the same master in twofold form. I am opposed to this amphibious and double-tongued nature, as well as to fluctuations in attributes and designations. I cannot help thinking it a great mistake that we did not get rid of the little diplomacy by means of the Reichs-

¹ Bismarck Jahrbuch, vi., p. 100. Bernstorff to Bismarck. London, March 6th, 1868. Private letter.

² Bernstorff to Goltz. London, March 10th, 1868. Private letter.

tag, and did not have a title offered to the King suitable to his position as Chief of the North German Confederation, of the entire military power, and of the Zollverein. This would, I think, have made things much easier, and reconciled many German Princes and states to circumstances, who would rather submit to a German Kaiser or King than to a King of Prussia. It was certainly expected that no difficulties would have been made, and the longer it lasts the more difficult things become. I have the feeling that France will be armed soon, and when Austria gradually pulls herself together, another war will be necessary to settle the rest of the world; while the better I become acquainted with facts, the stronger grows my conviction that there was a time when everything could have been settled without any serious risk. It is possible that revolutions in France and South Germany will work for us, and that we can then easily settle Germany without a war, if we act vigorously and quickly.

"I have no desire to push myself as representative of the Federation, or to make much of the position, but now, as we are Prussian Ambassadors, representing a crowned head, it is different from what it will be when we have quite passed over to the Confederation, and come on its Budget, and shall have to call ourselves accordingly. That appears to me to be so Republican American or Swiss!

"I have had cards printed for myself for special occasions, thus:—'The Prussian and North German Ambassador,' but I cannot make up my mind to use them; my French card I have retained unaltered. I consider 'L'Ambassadeur de Prusse et de l'Allemagne du Nord' logically incorrect, because the latter includes the former, and would be sufficient. But I am only willing to leave out Prussia if I can be 'l'Ambassadeur de l'Allemagne.' If we drop

Prussia they will probably not acknowledge our Prussian seniority in the Diplomatic Corps.

"All these questions have their ridiculous and serious sides, as well as their insignificant and significant aspects, and must not, therefore, be lightly regarded. Thus we must say: 'Confederation de l'Allemagne du Nord,' and not 'Confederation du Nord de l'Allemagne,' for it correctly gives the exact meaning and secures the first place in the alphabet.

"I must confess that the King could quite well have taken the title of German Kaiser—the title of King I think unpractical, there being three other kings—and this symbol of the unity of all that part of Germany which is not Austrian would calm many Germans who dislike the division into halves or two-thirds. If unity or solidarity in some practical things could be established between the north and south, not by agreements, but permanently and inseparably by constitutional means, I do not understand why a complete amalgamation is necessary for the whole empire, as in the north. It will never be voluntary in the south without war, but only by revolution after it recovers in some measure from the horror and helplessness of 1866, and stands on its own legs again."

A few weeks after writing this letter, the political situation changed in England, in a surprising manner, as regards home policy. Disraeli's Government was seriously defeated at the end of April by Gladstone's demand for the Disestablishment of the Irish Church. Disraeli tried vainly to defer it.

The Government remained in office provisionally, waiting for a General Election, which took place under the Reform Bill for the first time, and resulted in a Liberal majority. Gladstone became head of the new Govern-

ment, and in his choice of Ministers he selected those who had held the chief places in the last Liberal Cabinet. John Bright became President of the Board of Trade, and Lord Clarendon became Secretary for Foreign Affairs for the third time.

Gladstone's great interest was in home policy, and he had many measures to introduce, causing him to let foreign affairs slip more into the background, as had the last two Conservative Governments. Interest in continental affairs only awoke when Louis Napoleon attempted to obtain a portion of Belgium. The Emperor thought he must appease French public opinion by some annexation. He was disquieted by Bonapartist reactionaries, who desired a victorious war, to restore Napoleonic prestige; and on the other hand, by an advance of Republican Socialism in France. He had, however, forgotten what a hornets' nest his attempt on Belgium would stir up in England. He tried to attain his object by degrees, by negotiating through the director of the Eastern Railway for the purchase of two railways in Belgium, and of one in Holland. This raised such a storm of indignation in England that grave results might have followed if the Belgians had not declared the purchase null and void. At the height of the crisis, as Sybel writes, the question was at last asked:—"What will Prussia do? To which of the disputing Powers will she give her support?"

Bernstorff had also busied himself with the subject, and while all England was echoing with the cry of war, he had privately conferred with the English Ministers, trying to show them the advantage of a rapprochement between Great Britain and the North German Confederation.

The idea of some "assurance" against the coming attack of Louis Napoleon seemed desirable to him. If nothing were settled, both countries would be unpleasantly sur-

prised some day, he thought. Bismarck deemed these plans premature ; he rather desired an absolute neutrality for Prussia and the North German Federation in the event of war between France and England. Bernstorff maintained his opinion in a despatch addressed to the Chancellor of the Federation.

Bernstorff to Bismarck.

"LONDON, July 31st, 1869.

". . . . I see from your Excellency's despatch that His Majesty is of your opinion that the difficulties which might arise from my exchange of thought with the English Government are likely to be greater than if we continue in our present way of trying to gain the confidence of the Cabinet without definite promises and explanations. I am sure, as I stated at the end of my despatch on the 23rd, that his Majesty's Government is better able to judge than I am of the disadvantage the want of a previous understanding might have for the ultimate military position, and whether, after weighing the dangers on both sides, it be advisable to discuss further with the English Government. I, therefore, made no special proposal, but believed myself obliged to point out the disadvantage arising to both parties by longer silence. If your Excellency reminds me that I have often suggested the uncertainty of this country's action at the last moment, and now think it is impossible for English Ministers to give a definite answer (the love of peace, the national feeling and interest for Belgium prevailing, nor how far the policy of the Crown depends upon this), I readily agree with you. It would have been in contradiction to my own opinion, had I, at the beginning of the Belgian question, without careful consideration of the

development of events, as well as of the opinions of the Ministers and Members of Parliament, advised His Majesty's Government to interrogate the Cabinet concerning its position, and to offer a vigorous alliance. This has, however, not been the case, but for months the views of the English Government on this question have been weighed and have taken definite shape. Without boasting, I can say that I have not been idle in work or observation, and have at least contributed to the strengthening of the feeling of solidarity and the mutual interests between the two countries. You will find in my private despatch, No. 77, of April 31st, that Lord Clarendon said: '*Si le danger était devenue imminent, je me serais mis, je ne puis dire d'accord, mais en communication avec vous,*' because it depended as much on us as on him to come to an understanding.

"In the same conversation I reminded Lord Clarendon that your Excellency had declared to Lord Augustus Loftus that we were prepared to insure peace by an alliance against every disturber of it. I took it for granted then that matters were made sufficiently clear, and that both parties would, of course, come to an agreement concerning their action in the event of imminent danger. Such was our intention. It was more a question of the proper moment, than of mutual terms, so far as Belgium was concerned. And it was for me to be able to make it understood by the English Cabinet that Belgium without a direct attack might be endangered by a Franco-German war, as Lord Clarendon himself said yesterday. (See to-day's despatch, No. 137.) As to the right moment for such an understanding, which I never intended as a formal treaty of alliance, but only an assurance of mutual support, I expressed no opinion. How much the eventuality of war is in the minds of statesmen here is proved by a

conversation with Lord Russell, upon whom I called at Richmond on Monday, the 18th. He said that the idea that England would not go to war now as in former times, either for her honour or her interests, was quite erroneous. In the first place, she had made a costly war with Abyssinia, and rightly, as even Lord Stanley, who declares himself averse from war, admitted, and for the latter reason she would go to war if Belgium were threatened. It is a settled thing with all parties that England could not suffer the absorption of Belgium. Then I said I was glad to hear such a decided opinion from him, as nothing was so injurious to England abroad, especially in Germany, as a doubt whether she would hold to her good old traditions, and again take up arms, and that I regretted there were so many delusions concerning Belgium, as, for instance, that France and Germany could carry on war without Belgium being threatened, especially if France were victorious; and when I added that I should like to destroy such delusions, Lord Russell eagerly said: 'I have just written the same to Clarendon this morning, when I returned various things which he had submitted to me on the subject of war. I told him that in the event of war between France and Germany, we must not give binding promises of neutrality, for probably the time would come when we would have to go to war.'

"If I thought it due to His Majesty's Government and to myself to explain the desire at the end of my despatch No. 118, of the 23rd, and thus to clear up an apparent contradiction between my former and present views, I beg your Excellency not to read in it any regret or doubt at the decision of His Majesty. I expected it after matters had been somewhat modified. When and whether the necessity will again arise as to an understanding with England remains an open question. Meantime, I think

the Belgium railway crisis has had the fortunate result of creating more confidence between Prussia and England. Much mistrust has been got rid of, and things between the countries have assumed a more peaceful and natural character. This would be still stronger were it not for the influence of the irreconcilable elements in highest quarters. The power of circumstances will, I trust, neutralize all such harmful influences, and the more the common danger and interests come to light, the closer will be the connection between the two countries." After the Belgium scare was over, and the former state of things had returned, distrust of Louis Napoleon remained in full force in England. Serious results for France might have followed, if the "Liberal Era" inaugurated for dynastic reasons, by the Emperor, in opposition to his old friends, had not spoken in his favour. The plebiscite had taken place, and had made a greater impression in England than in Germany. The Empire having obtained the majority of votes, it was thought in London that its position in home affairs was strengthened for many years to come.

CHAPTER XX

THE WAR OF 1870-1871—COUNT BERNSTORFF'S LAST YEARS

The candidature of Prince von Hohenzollern—Bismarck's Circular Letter to the representatives of the North German Federation—Bernstorff and Lord Granville—Rejection of the English proposals of intervention—Bernstorff's certainty of the success of Germany—His warning saves the Prussian Fleet—The German Embassy in London during the war—Notes by Count Andreas von Bernstorff—The English Press—The feeling in England for Germany—Change after Sedan—Bernstorff's personal position in London—English commerce and English neutrality—Sale of arms to France—Negotiations with the Bonapartists—The Empress Eugénie—Regnier—Boyer—The Empress refuses to surrender any territory—Countess Bernstorff's work for the wounded—Carlyle—English efforts to intervene for peace—Preliminary history of the London Conference—Odo Russell at Versailles—Negotiations concerning the admission of Jules Favre as Plenipotentiary at the Conference—Renewed efforts at intervention by England in February—The war indemnity—Count Andreas von Bernstorff at Versailles—Conclusion of the London Conference (The Black Sea Conference)—Bernstorff Imperial Ambassador—The Crown Prince conferring the Order of the Black Eagle on Bernstorff—Count Bernstorff's death—Letters of condolence from the Crown Prince and the Kaiserin Augusta—The character and intellectual development of Count Bernstorff—The end.

“Der Mensch erfährt, er sei auch wer er mag,
Ein letztes Glück und einen letzten Tag!”

THE stormy time approaches when the candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern for the throne of Spain, and the political negotiations concerning it filled all Europe with anxiety. In the Circular Letter of July 7th, addressed to the representatives of the North German Confederation, Bismarck proclaimed the principle

that the Prussian Government abstained from influencing the election to the Spanish throne, and "all influence, either for or against its acceptance, must be withheld from the candidates." But by this declaration the Chancellor came into collision with the other Great Powers, which stated that since 1815 all candidatures to a throne had been subject to an understanding between the Great Powers. Lord Granville had become Secretary for Foreign Affairs after Lord Clarendon's death in June, and he greatly exerted himself in urging King Wilhelm to forbid the Prince from accepting the crown.

"Under these circumstances," writes Lorenz in his work, "King Wilhelm and the Founding of the German Empire," "the Circular Letter of July 7th was a necessary step for the Prussian Government to take, and the task allotted to Bernstorff was one of extraordinary difficulty. It would probably have been quite insoluble if the wise attitude of the King at Ems, and the withdrawal of the Hereditary Prince from the candidature had not smoothed matters. Meanwhile, Bernstorff seems to have been authorized to take a decided tone with Lord Granville. He declared that Germany would not make war for the Spanish throne, but that if it pleased France to declare war on account of the choice of Spain, it would prove that she intended to do so without just cause."¹ The meeting of the King with Benedetti took place on July 14th, on the Promenade at Ems. "Count Bernstorff was commissioned to explain to Lord Granville on July 15th that Bismarck was unable to put any proposals of intervention before the King. Prussia had shown calmness and moderation under the threats of France, and all further yielding must appear like a fresh humiliation. Public opinion in Germany had, owing to the threats of France, come to the conclusion

¹ Lorenz. "Founding of the German Empire." See page 269.

that war must be declared, even under the most difficult conditions, rather than concede to the unjust demands of France."¹

When the arrogance of the French war party withdrew the last plank for an understanding, and the passionate excitement of the German people made itself heard in stormy, warlike enthusiasm, Bernstorff's heart beat high with overpowering patriotic feelings. He had been afraid that an understanding might be arrived at, concerning the questions of the moment between Prussia and France, and the union of South Germany with the North would be brought about by the aid of Louis Napoleon and at the price of concessions to him. Although Bernstorff was convinced of the deep national sentiment felt by all leading politicians in Germany, he knew that King Wilhelm, who had looked with a bleeding heart at the suffering and misery of war in recent years, would willingly delay the frightful settlement as long as possible. He certainly had no belief in the likelihood of any portion of German territory being surrendered, but there might be some other way of settlement. That was at an end now, and there was no more indecision or wavering possible. How differently he thought now than he had done before the beginning of the war with Austria, when he had been a pessimist, and feared that the Great Powers, England and France in particular, would step in at the last moment and snatch the price of victory from Prussia. In spite of all his experience at Vienna in 1849, it lay heavily on his heart then, that the war was between Germans, brothers. But now he felt that the war was against an hereditary enemy, and he greeted it with enthusiasm. There would be an end of the wretchedness and misery, and the Federation of Germany would be consolidated in all its

¹ Lorenz. "Founding of the German Empire." See page 273.

grandeur now or never. He no longer feared the intrigues of the other states against Germany, or their intriguing to tear from her the victory so hardly won.

His intercourse with English statesmen was cheerful and full of confidence. He argued feelingly and convincingly with Lord Granville about the justness and righteousness of the German cause. The 'Times' gives a very fine description of his calmness at the beginning of the war in its obituary notice of him a few years after the great events: "One of Mrs. Gladstone's afternoon parties in the gardens at the Treasury was given on the 15th of July, 1870. The open breach between France and Germany, announced that very day in the French Chambers, was the all-absorbing topic. The company was broken up into eager and agitated groups. Was all hope of peace over? Would neither of the exasperated antagonists listen to reason?—were the questions eagerly discussed by Cabinet Ministers and Ambassadors, when in walked Count Bernstorff with the Countess on his arm, and after a brief colloquy with Baron Brunnow and Mr. Gladstone, took his seat at a tea-table and calmly related to the small circle that gathered round him exactly how matters stood. War (he said) was inevitable; neither party could recede. Events had been precipitated, but foreseen. The French might gain some advantage by a dash, if the state of their preparation admitted of it, but within nineteen days the Germans would have 300,000 men prepared to take the aggressive on the left bank of the Rhine, with proportionate reinforcements and reserves, 'and they would march to Paris.' In less than nineteen days they had concentrated in overwhelming force, and within twenty they made the first step at Weissenbourg in the triumphant career which led them, as Count Bernstorff foretold, to Paris.

"The calm confidence with which Bernstorff awaited the result was no less remarkable than the absence of exultation

when victory after victory was announced. 'They are dearly bought victories,' was his constant reply to the congratulations which were pressed upon him, and when details were received of the terrific carnage at Gravelotte, his saddened mien resembled that of Falkland murmuring 'Peace, peace, peace.'"

His promptitude saved the Prussian fleet at the beginning of hostilities, which, on its way to Madeira via Plymouth, was in ignorance of the danger of the situation, and might easily have been destroyed by the French.¹ Bernstorff's warning reached the German ships in time, and Prince Adalbert at once returned to the North Sea, and entered the Elbe as the wisest course for him to pursue. During the war Bernstorff did good service by reporting news of importance. His son, Count Andreas, who, at the outbreak of the war, was Secretary of Legation at Dresden, was called to London to take the place of Second Secretary. He writes as follows:—

"A great part of our work during the first weeks of the war was to send important news for our army. We could often obtain most important news of the movements of the French fleet in England, and announce it at headquarters. Our military attaché, Colonel Roerdansz, had not gone to the army, but remained in London to carry out the very responsible work of sifting the news and judging its value. A member of our embassy even went as far as Cherbourg with an English passport, and, in his zeal, actually went on board a French man-of-war.

¹ Letter from Colonel Roerdansz, Military Secretary to Bernstorff:

"PLYMOUTH, *July 13th*, 1870.

9.10.

"If war breaks out, it is highly probable that your Excellency has saved our fleet. Without your Excellency's prompt telegram it would have been at Brest and in the greatest danger."

Bernstorff had sent the warning through him.

"An equally important task for our embassy was to gain an influence over the Press in England. In no country in the world has the Press such power as in England, and none stood so high at that time. To supply it suitably with news was of the greatest interest to us. English newspapers are printed at night, and the editors, who are busy as bees collecting news in the afternoon, are to be seen at their offices generally about ten o'clock. I have often gone to 'The Times' office in the evening, for my father, and I took the celebrated draft of Benedetti's agreement there.¹ I have retained pleasant recollections of our relations with the Press, and I know that it gratefully recognized the treatment it received from the German Embassy."

Public opinion in England was in favour of Germany till the battle of Sedan. Bernstorff received sympathetic letters from the most distinguished Englishmen, politicians and scholars, directly war was declared, in which they spoke in fiery language of the German cause as a just one. The following letter is from Lord Shaftesbury, the well-known philanthropist, whose life was spent in untiring efforts to ameliorate the condition of the working classes, and in school reform.

Lord Shaftesbury to Count Bernstorff.

[Private letter.]

"LONDON, *July 16th*, 1870.

"Dear Count Bernstorff,

"As an Englishman, as a Protestant, and as a Christian, allow me to express my deep detestation of this Anti-German, Popish, and unholy war. I regard with an amount of horror that I cannot describe the issues of

¹ A copy of the secret agreement between France and Prussia, drawn up by Benedetti in 1870, is among Bernstorff's papers.

so fearful a conflict, the devastation of human life, human industry, and human happiness, and all to gratify the personal ambition of one bad and reckless man.

"I feel deeply for the people of France, led into this bloody strife by their godless and infatuated ruler.

"I think if the Prussian Government will speedily publish a manifesto of their just and righteous cause it will secure the sympathy of Europe—and proclaim a day of prayer for all your people to obtain the blessing of Almighty God on the manly, virtuous, and holy defence of your Fatherland.

"May God be with your King, your nation, and your armies.

"Very truly yours,

"SHAFTESBURY."

The news of the first successes of the Germans was received with acclamation in London, and until the battle of Sedan this was repeated at each victory. The telegram announcing Louis Napoleon's capture was sent from Reuter's office by special messenger to Count Bernstorff, as Count Andreas Bernstorff writes. He immediately sent congratulations to the King, and on September 11th he received the following telegram from him:—

"RHEIMS, *September 11th*, 1870.

7.15 a.m.

"Your telegram of congratulation only received to-day. My sincerest thanks for it. An historical event has, by God's grace, been accomplished. May His blessing still be ours, for difficult times are before us.

"(Signed)

"WILHELM."

Until that time England had rejoiced at the course of events. "After Sedan," continues Count Andreas, "public opinion changed entirely. The recollections of Waterloo were wiped out by that of the comradeship in the Crimea. This influenced people. Many Englishmen who had enjoyed life in the brilliant French capital were glad at the check given to Louis Napoleon's wanton attack, but they thought that we ought to make peace after Sedan. They felt for beautiful Paris, and did not wish to see France too much humiliated. This sentiment did not, of course, oppress or annoy us personally. I had experienced the same in 1864 when I spent my holidays with my parents at the time of the siege of Düppel, and public opinion was then entirely with Denmark. But I must give the English credit for not letting such differences affect their personal intercourse; indeed, they endeavour not to let it interfere with personal friendships. The number of friends whom my father and mother had made during their residence of sixteen years in England was very large. Our house was the headquarters for a great work in aid of the wounded in those days, and not only the German colony gave zealous assistance, but many English people were good 'Samaritans, so that my mother could send away large supplies of liniment medicines, and clothing, etc. There were great difficulties for us, owing to the strict neutrality which Great Britain had declared in July. English trading is not easily restricted, and is capable of even selling to the enemies of its own country all the necessary material of war. Trade in arms was carried on with France, which caused my father to address several Notes to the English Government. It was said of him afterwards that by the 'benevolent neutrality' he proposed, he introduced a new idea into international law."

Bernstorff exerted himself most actively in urging the

English Government to take measures against these transactions, and both before and after this time he tried to maintain good relations between Germany and England. It was to be feared that the irritation in Germany at the sale of arms would create estrangement between the two countries. The great mass of people in England regarded the sale of arms to France as natural and legitimate. Only a few idealists disbelieved the fact, and thought it an invention of the German Press. Thus Lord Shaftesbury believed the denials of the newspapers, and he sent a cutting from the "Times" to Bernstorff, on the subject of the sale of arms, adding a few lines forwarded to him by a manufacturer in Birmingham, stating how much the English had been traduced, for the arms were from America. But unfortunately, they were all of English make. As the Press warmly entered into the dispute, Bernstorff, at the desire of his Government, sent a Memorandum to Lord Granville, saying, however, that it was an unofficial document. Lord Granville replied that his Government attached importance to having the German original, or a translation of the Memorandum, as it was most desirable that an explanation should be given to Germany, as well as to England by the publication of it.¹ Bernstorff replied on September 16th, 1870, that neither a German original nor a translation existed, so that he was unable to grant Lord Granville's request, and though there was nothing to be said against an official answer to the Memorandum, he did not desire its publication. If the English Government should publish the correspondence on the matter, he also would be obliged to reply in detail to Lord Granville's Note. He, therefore, begged that the publication might be delayed until he could ascertain that his Government had no objection to its publication in the Blue Book. Lord Granville laconically replied that

¹ Granville to Bernstorff. Foreign Office, September 15th, 1870.

Bernstorff's request could not be granted, as he had already sent the two papers, the Memorandum and Bernstorff's letter, to the papers.¹ The further course of the affair is known. The remembrance of England's action still touches the hearts of German people.

"A very interesting part of our political work," writes Count Andreas, "was the negotiations with the Bonapartists after Sedan. The difficulties for us Germans lay in the fact that there was no French Government with which to conclude the terms of peace. Any new Regent or President could hardly take upon himself the odium of such a peace. The thought of saving the Empire, therefore, filled the hearts of the Bonapartists. Bazaine's army was shut up in Metz, and this army could maintain order, if freed, and protect and support the dynasty when peace was concluded with Germany. As the Emperor was a prisoner at Wilhelmshöhe, the Empress Eugénie ought to undertake the Regency. Numerous Bonapartists called upon us at the embassy to obtain the release of Bazaine's army, and the settlement of peace. My father had a conversation with the Empress Eugénie in London for this purpose."

The preliminary details of the interview were as follows :—

The negotiations between the Empress Eugénie and Bismarck began at Ferrières in September, 1870, and were carried on at Versailles. The somewhat romantic adventurer, Régnier, figured as mediator, and with genuine fanaticism tried to bring about the reinstatement of the Empire.² He had, as a passport, a photograph which the Empress had given to him, on which were the words: "View of Hastings, which I have chosen for my dear Louis.—Eugénie." Bismarck played off this conversation against Jules Favre in

¹ Granville to Bernstorff. Foreign Office, London, September 17th, 1870. Private letter.

² Posschinger, "Bismarck Portefolio," ii., p. 53. Régnier was from Mentone.

their conferences. Louis Napoleon had, so the Chancellor assured him, expressed the desire through Régnier to see him and have further conversation. Favre became greatly excited,¹ when Bismarck calmed him by saying that he had declined this interview, as that individual was not of sufficient importance for his purpose.² The Bonapartists successfully opened up communications with the garrison in Metz.

General Boyer was sent on October 10th by Bazaine from Metz to Versailles, where he arrived on the 14th. Bismarck told him that he would only take up Bazaine's proposals if he declared in the name of the army that it should be considered as the Imperial army and recognized the Empress Eugénie as Regent. He further desired that she should send a manifesto to the French people announcing her Regency, and at the same time publish the conditions of peace discussed between her and the German Federation, including, of course, the promise of cession of territory. Boyer was back in Metz on the 17th. The Generals declared themselves in agreement with Bismarck's first condition, but they decided that Bazaine could not sign any deed relating to a surrender of territory. Boyer had to return to Versailles and thence travel to England to see the Empress Eugénie and obtain her decision.³ At Versailles they would agree to nothing until the General had been to London, so he immediately set out for England.

It was at that time that the Empress's interview with

¹ Posschinger, "Prince Bismarck and the Diplomats," p. 312. Régnier, with Bismarck's permission, slipped through the Prussian lines into Metz, where he was entrusted by Bazaine with a political rôle.

² Moritz Busch, "Leaves from a Diary," i., 293.

³ The Empress negotiated with Bernstorff first; Boyer was to enter upon the scene later, in order to set his seal to the concluding arrangements. From Bernstorff's papers.

Bernstorff took place. She sent the following note on October 3rd, without any date, and without address:—

“Monsieur le Comte!

“Le temps est si précieux et les intermédiaires nous en font tant perdre que je désirerais vous parler.

“Lady Cowley m’a offert sa maison de Londres, 20, Albemarle Street. Je vais m’y rendre aujourd’hui. Si vous pouviez y venir personne ne vous verra. Je n’ai pas besoin de vous dire que je vous demande le secret *le plus absolu* en ce qui me touche.

“Croyez, etc.,

“COMTESSE DE PIERREFONDS.”

The allusion to lost time through intermediaries shows that the Comtesse de Pierrefonds took it for granted that Bernstorff was aware of all previous transactions. “Of course,” writes Count Andreas, “the interview had to be kept very secret. My father drove there in a cab, not in our carriage. I do not recollect the political result of this interview. These discussions were usually unsuccessful, because the Bonapartists would make no sacrifices, though France, after long continuance of war, acceded to them later on. I remember as a curious incident that my father told me that the Empress was unmistakably rouged. She had wiped the tears from her eyes during the conversation, as ladies do who do not wish the moisture to spoil the artistic colouring on their cheeks.”

The next day Lord Cowley wrote to Bernstorff.¹ As his letter was sent on October 24th, the date of the other letter can easily be fixed.

¹ Lord Cowley to Count Bernstorff. London, October 24th, 1870. 20, Albemarle Street. Among Bernstorff’s papers. Lord Cowley was English Ambassador in Paris. He could not well give the appearance of favouring the Empress’s negotiations.

Lord Cowley begged Bernstorff to keep the interview of the previous day secret. "I consider it necessary to say that my presence in London just now is a pure accident, and that the arrival of the Countess at this moment was altogether unexpected, although I had placed my house at her disposal in case she should need it." Unfortunately, Bernstorff's part in the political discussions with the Bonapartists cannot be traced from his papers, nor whether he approved of a reconciliation with the Imperialists. Persigny played the part of intermediary at first in all the transactions. Clement Duvernois, one of the confidential Bonapartist agents, wished especially to accept Bismarck's proposal, with Bazaine's help, as quickly as possible, even with the condition of a surrender of territory.

The Empress, since she knew that Bismarck demanded portions of French territory, entered most reluctantly into further negotiations. To her confidants, as many letters of her faithful friends prove, she had said only a short time before Boyer's arrival that "she would take no step which would be regarded as a hateful attempt to divide the country, or to weaken it to the enemy's advantage."

"I should," she continued, "consent to a renunciation of the rights of the Imperial Family, to obtain success in the matter, as well as to its leaving France for an indefinite time. The question as to what form of Government arises from all this is secondary to what is the most important and highest—the independence of the country."¹

¹ "Letters of a Bonapartist," signed "P.," (Persigny?) without address or date. Appendix to Bernstorff's papers. Number 31.

According to Busch's Diary, Boyer had telegraphed to Bazaine on October 24th that all was at an end, because the Empress was opposed to the surrender of territory. The negotiations, therefore, were broken off. As is shown by the following, the events had not gone so far then, for the interviews continued until the 26th. This is proved by the following letter from General Boyer to Bernstorff:—

"Le Général Boyer prie respectueusement Son Excellence le Comte de

Louis Napoleon was also in favour of delay; he would have preferred to have thrust the responsibility of surrendering territory to another Government. He continued to permit his confidential friends, who mysteriously alluded to him in their letters as the "Principal," to set their hopes upon Bazaine, and, as we shall see, upon General Vinoy also. The arrival of General Boyer, upon whom the Empress looked with some anxiety at first, raised her hopes again. The negotiations continued in full swing. Bismarck was inclined to release Bazaine's army on the above-mentioned conditions, to which the Empress agreed. Bismarck declared that advances from the Germans must be on the understanding that territory was to be surrendered by the French. The Empress opposed this vehemently, and valuable time was lost. She lived in the delusion of gaining time, and thus being able to save everything. The entire negotiations, she explained, have no object, unless they guarantee the further existence of Bazaine's army. She, therefore, desired that the army should be allowed to procure the means of subsistence. Among Bernstorff's papers there is a draft of a provisional understanding, but undated:—

"Il est entendu que—le Général Boyer arrivé à Metz—on ferait prononcer l'armée, on publierait la proclamation de l'Impératrice et on discuterait les bases du traité. Mais la première condition si l'on veut arriver à un résultat sérieux, est que l'armée vive. C'est pourquoi l'on demande pour elle l'autorisation de se ravitailler en vivres."¹

Bernstorff de lui faire connaître s'il pourra le recevoir aujourd'hui vers une heure de l'après-midi.

"Il aurait l'honneur de lui faire une communication au nom de Sa Majesté l'Impératrice.

"Londres, le 26th octobre, 1870.

GÉNÉRAL BARON NAPOLEON BOYER.

¹ One of the Empress's confidants rightly says of her:—"L'Impératrice que j'ai vue faire les plus grands efforts en faveur de l'armée de Metz qui est l'objet de sa profonde sollicitude et de ses préoccupations constantes."

The greatest haste being necessary, the Empress Eugénie addressed the following despatch to Bismarck without date :—

“ À Monsieur le Comte de Bismarck, Versailles.

“ Je suis prête à donner des pleinpouvoirs pour traiter de la Paix au Maréchal Bazaine et à le nommer Lieutenant-Général de l'Empire.

“ Si vous acceptez, il est urgent de transmettre immédiatement copie de cette dépêche au Maréchal et de le laisser se ravitailler en vivres.

“ J'attends Votre réponse pour faire partir le Général Boyer muni des instructions.

“ EUGÉNIE.”¹

The Empress sent another despatch to King Wilhelm at Versailles.

“ Sire,

“ Votre Majesté à entre les mains la dépêche du Cte. de Bernstorff au Cte. de Bismarck.

“ Je fais appel au cœur du Roi, à la générosité de soldat, je supplie S. M. d'être favorable à ma demande.

“ Son succès est la condition indispensable pour la suite des négociations.

“ EUGÉNIE.”²

At the same time as the *pronunciamento* was issued in Paris, a rising was to be effected, and at the suggestion of Monsieur de Beaulieu, one of the most influential old Bonapartists, probably Persigny, had advised the Empress by letter to appeal to General Vinoy, which must be done

¹ The original, with the Empress's signature, is among Count Bernstorff's papers.

² The original, written entirely by the Empress, is among Count Bernstorff's papers.

with the greatest discretion. The General was an energetic man, he said, loyal and devoted and popular with the troops. It would be for Bismarck to have him sounded, and as soon as Paris capitulated, to entrust him with the Government, under the pretence of restoring order as Trochu's representative. If this takes place, Louis Napoleon could recall the deputies elected before September 4th, and consult with them about the new organization of the Government on the basis agreed to in the assembly of the deputies of the Corps Législatif of September 4th. To be enabled to carry on the election, another partisan of the Empress wrote asking Bismarck to have a certain district in France declared neutral for the Corps Législatif to assemble there without delay. A pass should be given to members to pass the Prussian lines, and they would, of course, be allowed to pass the French lines. When Parliament assembled they would be perfectly free to decide for or against a Republican Government.¹ The author had no doubt but that they would stand by the Empire and its restoration. Most Bonapartists desired the crown to be eventually given to Louis Napoleon's son, who would then have ascended the throne as Napoleon IV.

We have already heard of the despatch which Bernstorff sent to Bismarck at the desire of the Empress. This much is certain: that the Empress demanded that the garrison

¹ The paper referred to is, without date or signature, among Bernstorff's papers. The author calls himself "Président du dernier conseil des ministres parlementaires et investi en conséquence par les représentants légitimes de la nation de la seule autorité qui puisse, pour mettre fin à une situation désastreuse, les convoquer légalement." Thus Palikao appears to have been the author. One must realize the incident at the beginning of August, 1870, when as the result of the disquieting news from the seat of war, the Corps Législatif was convened. The first thing was the overthrow of the Ollivier Ministry, and the formation of a new one, Palikao becoming President, with the Portfolio of Minister of War, on August 9th. It was the last Ministry of the Empire. The paper before us is dated after the time of the fall of Metz, October 27th, and is addressed to Bismarck.

of Metz should be provisioned, and the consent to all the necessary measures for forming a new Government, while holding firmly to the non-surrender of territory. A short time previous to writing the despatch she had sent a short letter to King Wilhelm, in which she said with emphasis that it would not only be a great act, but one of statecraft, if Prussia renounced all claim to French territory, for otherwise there would be eternal hatred between the two nations. But the King and Bismarck decided to obtain the most important concession, that concerning the surrender of territory, before entering into anything further. The King considered the matter of sufficient importance to reply to the Empress's letter himself.

À sa Majesté l'Impératrice Eugénie.

“VERSAILLES, le 26 octobre, 1870.

“Madame!

“J'ai reçu la lettre que V.M. a bien voulu m'adresser et qui a évoqué des souvenirs du passé que je ne puis me rappeler sans regret.

“Personne plus que moi ne déplore le sang versé dans cette guerre qui V.M. le sait bien n'a pas été provoquée par moi.

“Depuis le commencement des hostilités ma préoccupation constante a été de ne rien négliger pour rendre à l'Europe les bienfaits de la paix si les moyens m'en étaient offerts par la France. L'entente aurait été facile tant que l'Empereur Napoléon s'était cru autorisé à traiter, et mon Gouvernement n'a même pas refusé d'entendre les propositions de M. Jules Favre et de lui offrir les moyens de rendre la paix à la France.

“Lorsque à Ferrières des négociations parurent être entamées au nom de V.M., on leur a fait un accueil empressé, et toutes les facilités furent accordées au Maréchal

Bazaine pour se mettre en relation avec V.M., et quand le Général Boyer vint ici, il était possible encore d'arriver à un arrangement si les conditions préalables pouvaient être remplies sans délai. Mais le temps s'est écoulé sans que les garanties indispensables pour entrer en négociations eussent été données.

"J'aime mon pays comme Vous Aimez le Vôtre et par conséquent je comprends les amertumes qui remplissent le cœur de V.M. et j'y compatis bien sincèrement. Mais après avoir fait d'immense sacrifices pour sa défense, l'Allemagne veut être assurée que la guerre prochaine la trouvera mieux préparée à repousser l'aggression sur laquelle nous devons compter aussitôt que la France aura réparé ses forces ou gagné des alliés. C'est cette triste considération seule, et non le désir d'aggrandir ma patrie dont le territoire est assez grands qui me force à insister sur des cessions de territoire qui n'ont d'autre but que de reculer le point de départ des armées françaises qui à l'avenir viendront nous attaquer.

"Je ne puis juger si V.M. était autorisée à accepter au nom de la France les conditions que demande l'Allemagne mais je crois qu'en le faisant, Elle aurait épargné à sa patrie bien des maux et l'aurait préservée de l'anarchie qui aujourd'hui menace une nation dont l'Empereur pendant vingt ans, avait réussi à développer la prospérité.

"Je suis, Madame, etc.,

"GUILLAUME."

Here ended the provisional negotiations, which were only taken up again at a later stage of the campaign. It is mentioned here on account of things connected with it. Busch writes on December 27th, 1870: "The Bonapartists seem to have been very active and to have great plans. Persigny and Palikao have, according to Bernstorff's despatch,

the intention of having Orleans neutralized by us for the Corps Législatif to meet there to decide whether there shall be a Republic or a Monarchy. In case of the latter, which dynasty shall rule? They will wait a little till the people are more easily led.”¹

This last attempt was wrecked by the Empress's obstinacy in not surrendering a piece of French territory. At last, at the beginning of January, the Bonapartists were more yielding. Busch notes:—

“VERSAILLES, *January 11th*, 1871.²

“Bernstorff announces that Clement Duvernois, who was a Minister of Louis Napoleon's, will come here to Versailles in the name of the Empress to negotiate peace. She will agree to the cession of territory, with the frontier demanded by us, to a further payment of war indemnity, and the holding of a given part of France by our troops until the payment is agreed on, and will promise not to enter into negotiations about peace with any other Power than Germany. Duvernois says she is not popular, but she will show energy, and as legal Regent have more authority and grant us more security than anyone elected by the representatives, who would be dependent on these latter. He has helped to provision Paris, and, therefore, knows that it must fall soon, and is in a hurry to go on with his transaction, and is employing this time for it. Will he be received when he comes? Perhaps, so that the Regents in Paris and Bordeaux hear of it and become more yielding.”

Beust informed Bernstorff that the Emperor had not given up the hope of returning to France, and at his question as to whether he cherished any hopes for himself

¹ Busch's Diary, ii., 2.

² *Ibid.*, ii., 36.

or his dynasty, had replied that he himself expected to ascend the throne again. The negotiations went on and were adroitly used by Bismarck to bring pressure on the French Republican Plenipotentiaries. On January 23rd Bismarck said to Favre: "You have come too late; it is only difficult for me to choose with whom I shall treat; the Emperor, Prince Napoleon, and the Regent are all desirous of doing it. I have treated with the Emperor, and believe this a very good arrangement." Favre replied:—"What you have done me the honour to remark is not meant seriously." "I am certain," answered Bismarck, "to be able to restore the Empire; we have ten thousand prisoners who wish to recall the Emperor; we will enter Paris, and you may rest assured that we will be very glad to conclude peace with him."¹

Busch writes again on January 29th: "A despatch from Bernstorff proves that Bismarck has intimated that Louis Napoleon ought not to miss the right moment; and also that Pilikao has not agreed to the plan of leaving the National Guard armed after the capitulation; it would be dangerous, he thinks. Vinoy and La Roncière would be for the Emperor, and able to command the troops in the town."²

The last part of the negotiations was carried on by Duvernois independently. Bismarck threatened Thiers that he would settle with him. Hardly were the preliminaries of peace concluded after this threat, than Clement Duvernois appeared with an agreement by which the Empress was willing to make concessions of territory. "She yields at last, but too late."³

¹ Posschinger, "Prince Bismarck and the Diplomats," 332-44.

² Vinoy had been recommended to Morny by Clement Duvernois. Ostend, October 8th, 1870. In Bernstorff's papers.

³ Posschinger, "Prince Bismarck and the Diplomats," 144.

The scanty information available concerning these negotiations has been fully set forth in order to give an outline of Bernstorff's diplomatic negotiations with the Bonapartist party. A great portion of the correspondence between them and Versailles appears to have passed through his hands. But there is no statement in his papers as to his own opinion regarding the demands of the partisans of the Imperial party, or whether he thought a restoration of the Empire possible.

The Countess was a bright example of true womanliness during the war, both in the support she gave to her husband, and in all she endeavoured to do for the wounded. She placed herself at the head of the numerous associations which did noble work in England for the objects she had at heart. Her greatest reward was the very warm appreciation her efforts met with from Queen Augusta.

Queen Augusta to Countess Bernstorff.

"HAMBURG, 22. A., 1870.

"I beg you, dear Countess, to accept my sincere thanks for your untiring and successful work for our wounded, and to express my thanks to those from whom such abundant and blessed assistance has come.

"The great time in which we are living lays boundless sacrifices upon us, and all Germany unites in making them. We are grateful for the sympathy from abroad. It is a great comfort to us.

"That *you* are the intermediary of the benefits which the Central German Association and the Women's Patriotic Association receive from England, adds to our appreciation.

"May God, Who has done so much for us, still be

merciful to us, and grant us the longed-for blessing of peace. Greet your husband and children for me.

"Always with the same old sentiments,

"Your

"AUGUSTA."

The Empress Augusta to Countess Bernstorff.

"BERLIN, *January 25th*, 1871.

"Dear Countess,

"I make use of Herr von Kusserow's return to thank you again for everything you have sent us. A special blessing rests upon the gifts of love from England, and they are due to your assistance.

"You have done good in the real sense of the word. May God reward you. May He still help us. May England and Germany be united in future in peace and sympathy, and may the blood which has been poured out protect the future from further dangers.

"I beg you to accept the enclosed as an expression of my feelings.¹ Greet your husband and son for me.

"AUGUSTA."

The Empress Augusta to Countess Bernstorff.

"BERLIN, *April 2nd*, 1871.

"Dear Countess,

"Best thanks for your last letter, and for your untiring work for the well-being of the Fatherland. May God bless your work. . . . Pray write to me soon, and at length, about your experiences and impressions of last year. Everything interests me that comes from London. Many greetings to your husband, whose exertions for the good

¹ A brooch with a Red Cross and a portrait of the Empress.

relations between here and there I know how to value very highly.

“With the old sentiments,

“Your

“AUGUSTA.”

English public opinion had changed after the battle of Sedan. The greater the successes of Germany, the stronger became the sympathy for France, so that it was sometimes almost impossible for Bernstorff to get the real facts into the Press. All the French newspaper inventions about “German barbarism” were believed. The only real pleasure which Bernstorff experienced amid all the demonstrations for France was the genuine enthusiasm for German genius and the defence of the German cause, by the celebrated author, Carlyle. In the struggle against a world of prejudice, the old Germanic hero of the pen put forth his whole strength, and his words fell like a sharp sword stroke upon all the Frenchified English! When Bernstorff forwarded a telegram expressing gratitude to Carlyle from “unknown friends in Hamburg,” he received the following letter:—

“Sir,

“CHELSEA, *November 26th*, 1870.

“The telegram from my unknown friends at Hamburg is naturally gratifying to me; and it acquires a double value from the cordial, polite, and emphatic manner in which your Excellency is pleased to concur in that matter. For me, the poor Service in question was, in a sense, compelled by the voice of my own Conscience, and if it can anywhere do any good at all, I am more than rewarded. My persuasion is, withal, that whatever our newspapers may say, the great body of solid English Opinion on the subject is in agreement with my own.

“Be pleased to signify my thanks to those unknown

friends at Hamburg, and to accept the still more hearty acknowledgments which I owe to Yourself, who have deigned to be their messenger on this occasion.

“With many sincere respects,

“I have the honour to be

“Your Excellency's most obedient,

“TH. CARLYLE.”

As the voice of public opinion in England was raised more and more in favour of mediation, even if there was no desire for England to enter into the struggle, diplomatists, after the battle of Sedan, made efforts to this end. On September 15th an English emissary entered the field hospital. He found Bismarck at Meaux. “The young, black-haired gentleman of yesterday,” writes Busch, “is Mr. Edward Malet, an attaché of the English embassy at Paris. He brought a letter from Lord Lyons, who asks whether the Count will negotiate with Favre about terms for an armistice. The chief, who conversed with him over a bottle of Kirschwasser yesterday evening, is said to have replied to him: ‘As to the conditions of peace, yes; as to an armistice, no.’ Bismarck wrote the same thing to Lord Lyons. He had sent a despatch to Bernstorff on September 12th, in which he explained that the English idea must be firmly withstood, as an armistice at this time could only injure German affairs.”¹

Thiers' efforts in England were all in vain. Later on, at the beginning of November, the Chancellor complained to the French negotiators (Thiers had taken the place of Favre) about the intervention of neutrals, meaning England in particular. The attempt of this Power to interfere would have

¹ “Busch's Diary.” See also “Field-Marshal von Roon's Life.” Bismarck was very angry with the sentinels for letting him pass the lines. This mission of Malet's is very pleasantly described in his “Shifting Scenes.”

been repeated again in the course of a few months, if the signatories of the Treaty of Paris of 1856 had not received a Circular Despatch from Prince Gortschakoff, stating "that the Russian Government no longer considered itself bound by the limitations of their freedom of action in the Black Sea." The English Government and the whole nation were greatly agitated, and the British Cabinet. To quarrel with Germany at this time would have been most foolish,¹ and a Russo-Prussian understanding was feared in London. Bismarck, however, succeeded not merely in proving that he had no part in Gortschakoff's proceedings, but he also frustrated every attempt of the neutrals at intervention in the Black Sea Conference.

He proposed to Mr. Odo Russell, who had arrived at Versailles on November 19th, that the Conference might take place either at Constantinople or St. Petersburg. On November 26th Mr. Odo Russell² delivered Lord Granville's assent to the proposals, but at the same time expressed a desire that the Conference should be held in London. He said, "Lord Granville has explained to Count Bernstorff, when he proposed a Conference, that the English Government could only agree on the distinct condition that they would not bind themselves as to the results of the Conference." Bismarck at once had the telegrams from St. Petersburg and London fetched and showed them to Mr. Odo Russell. There was not a word in that sense in them. He begged Mr. Odo Russell to explain to Lord Granville that a Conference would fail of its object if they did not promise to abide by its

¹ Lorenz, "Kaiser Wilhelm and the Founding of the Empire," pp. 495, 496.

² Distinguished diplomatist, grandson of the fifth Duke of Bedford, and brother of the ninth duke. Born 1829; died 1884. He was raised to the peerage as Baron Amphilh in 1881.—Tr.

decisions.¹ An agreement was obtained at last. "On November 26th," writes Lorenz, "Mr. Odo Russell assured the Grand Duke of Baden that he was so satisfied on the Russian question that he must own that there was quite an erroneous idea in England as to Prussia's position." This may have been because the English Cabinet entertained an almost morbid distrust of Bismarck, for the latter had continually through Bernstorff tried to enlighten it as to the real intentions of Prussia.

There was an unpleasant incident with Jules Favre concerning the Conference. As Minister for Foreign Affairs he too had received the despatch with Russia's declaration from Chaudordy at Tours on November 11th. He thought it specially desirable that France should be represented at the Conference, because, by admitting an Envoy of the Republic the Great Powers recognized its existence. Favre was selected for this post at Tours. He tried hard to get to London. Lord Granville wrote to him on December 28th, 1870: "M. de Chaudordy has informed Lord Lyons that your Excellency has been proposed as representative for France at the Conference, and he has asked me to obtain a passport for your Excellency to pass the Prussian lines. I immediately begged Count Bernstorff to ask for one also and that a German officer, with a flag of truce, might be sent to you with it. Count Bernstorff informed me yesterday that a passport should be at your Excellency's disposal as soon as an officer from Paris was sent to the German headquarters to ask for it. He added that it could not be conveyed by a German officer until satisfaction had been given to the officer who was recently shot at while bearing a flag of truce. I have been told by M. Tissot that a good deal of time will elapse before this letter can be sent to

¹ Bismarck's conversation with Russell, according to Russell's despatch of November 26th, 1870. State archives, bk. xx., No. 4258.

you from the delegation at Bordeaux, and I have recommended Count Bernstorff to send it to you by some other means.”¹ Bismarck refused to let Favre go to London, because he considered it far more necessary for him to be in Paris and to continue the negotiations at Versailles. No further intervention came from England. Bismarck’s next interview with Russell took place in January concerning the affair at Duclair, where German troops had sunk an English ship. Bismarck expressed his regret and promised satisfaction. It caused annoyance in England, and there was further disquiet when the news of the cession of territory and the demand for six milliards as war indemnity was announced. A letter from Lord Shaftesbury to Bernstorff on November 12th is a sign of the times.

Lord Shaftesbury to Count Bernstorff.

“LONDON, *November 12th*, 1870.

“Dear Count Bernstorff,

“You will, I know, pardon my apparent presumption when you remember that I am over-zealous, perhaps, in the German cause.

“I have often made the observation that the German authorities had never, officially, declared what territory they required; or indeed, whether they required any territory at all.

“This morning my opinion was confirmed by a member of a great banking establishment. ‘Our house,’ he said, ‘has received letters from Versailles, in which it is stated that the Governing Powers are very angry, because they have been represented as desiring this annexation, and that annexation when, in fact, they have never made any declaration whatever to that effect.’

¹ Moritz Busch’s *Diary*, vol. ii., pp. 50-53.

"If this be so, and the matter be, so far as the public is concerned, 'an open question,' might I venture to state what I believe would be thankfully accepted in England (which perhaps you do not care very much about) and in Europe generally?

"The seizure either by force or by plebiscite is supremely distasteful in modern days. Very few question your right, and none doubt your power, to appropriate what you please, but nearly all dispute the policy.

"You might be quite as strong without any new territory as you would be with it. The retention of Strasburg, the permanent demolition of every fortress great or small on that side of France, the payment of an indemnity of one hundred and some millions of pounds sterling, and as you aspire to be a maritime Power, the surrender of half the ironclads, would leave Germany for half a century to come, perhaps for ever, the head of Military Europe.

"Surely peace is a necessity; and when we see the way, as duty for us all—it is wisdom too; for, as Scripture says, 'we know not what a day may bring forth.'

"France has suffered terribly, and perhaps deservedly; but she is not suffering alone; for heartrending losses have been largely inflicted on the beloved Fatherland.

"Pray, forgive me—I could not resist the impulse to write these few lines. I may address them to you as a friend—it would have been arrogance in me to have addressed them to Count Bismarck.

"Faithfully yours,

"SHAFTESBURY."

On February 24th, 1871, obeying the force of public opinion, Lord Granville sent the well-known despatch to Lord Augustus Loftus, in which he announced the decision of the English Cabinet to make representations to Germany as to the sum demanded as war indemnity, and to offer

England's intervention. Bismarck was, as he informed Bernstorff, very much annoyed at Lord Granville's action. In his interview with Thiers and Favre on February 24th, he said to the latter, with some excitement, that Mr. Odo Russell had delivered a despatch from Lord Granville wherein it was stated that the war indemnity of six milliards was too high, and a lower one was advised. The Frenchmen were not surprised when Bismarck cried excitedly: "I can very well see that you have no other intention than to recommence the war. You will then find protection and receive good advice from your good friends, the English."¹ After many discussions, Germany reduced the demand by one milliard and gave up Belfort.

Lord Granville constantly displayed at this time irritation and suspicion towards Bernstorff. This irritation was partly caused by the many difficulties which were of daily occurrence at the Black Sea Conference. For example: Lord Granville at once imagined intrigues when Bernstorff sent his son, Andreas, with despatches to Versailles in the middle of February, so as to let him gain some impression of the stirring times. Bernstorff wrote to Lord Granville on February 25th, saying emphatically that it was not his way to be other than loyal and honourable. He had constantly, and under all difficulties, aimed at an understanding with England.² Count Andreas had been sent to Versailles because he had no courier at the time to take despatches to Versailles, among which was a report of his last interview with Lord Granville concerning Lord Lyons' despatch of the fourth of the month, and he enclosed a copy of the report, in order, as he said, to prove his loyalty and frankness. "I repeat," he writes, "that my

¹ "Prince Bismarck and the Diplomats," by Posschinger. According to Russell's despatch of November 27th, 1870. State Archives, vol. xx., No. 4259.

² Bernstorff to Granville. London, Prussia House, February 25th. Private letter.

son had not any mission whatever, and that not a word has been said to him by the Chancellor on the subject, or by any other high official. We have laughed a good deal at what Russell, the correspondent of the 'Times,' reported on one occasion: 'Count Bernstorff, junior, has arrived here on a special mission,' and this has, unfortunately, been taken seriously."

The Black Sea Conference came to an end at last, after long and difficult negotiations. "My father," writes Count Andreas, in his reminiscences, "had received from headquarters, when the Conference began, no other instructions than to conduct the discussions so that no fresh cause of irritation between Russia and Germany should arise. He could report after it was over that he had attained this end. He was able to support Russia as a neutral friend during the Conference."

"Our present Conference," writes Bernstorff himself to Balan on March 24th, "was a difficult work, and all the more so for me, as we could not and would not irritate Russia, and yet did not wish to appear to be bound to her in any way. It has given me arduous work in confidential negotiations with the Plenipotentiaries, the French excepted, to bring them all to one mind. At last I gave Lord Granville a finished draft of the Treaty, which was accepted at a confidential meeting with them all at his house, and was signed the next day at the fifth sitting. My initiative was purposely ignored at that sitting. The *mise en scène* and the protocol of it was an utter farce.

"The more difficult and tedious the matter was, the more glad I am that it is finished, and quite to the satisfaction of Russia, for which I had been made personally responsible; as well as to the satisfaction of the other Powers, with the exception, perhaps, of France, which played a sad part there."

The Russian Ambassador, Baron Brunnow, expressed the Tsar's thanks in the following letter:—

“CHESHAM HOUSE, *Monday, April 10th, 1871.*

“Dear Count,

“A courier has just delivered the ratification of the Treaty of March 1st—13th. I informed Lord Granville of it immediately.

“Prince Gortschakoff has commissioned me to thank Lord Granville in the Tsar's name for his kind attitude at the Conference. The following paragraph in the same despatch I copy with genuine pleasure:—‘*Sa Majesté a hautement apprécié le concours loyal que V.E. a invariablement rencontré de la part de M. le Comte de Bernstorff et n'a pas laissé ignorer à l'Empereur-Roi à quel point Sa Majesté s'est réjoui de cette nouvelle preuve de l'intimité existante entre les deux Empires.*’ It is my pleasant duty to forward to you this expression of the Tsar, my master, and all the more as it was very near my heart, my dear Count, to prove that I am happy to make use of every opportunity to inform my Court of your kind interest and strong support.”

There are no documents among Bernstorff's papers giving details of the Conference. The protocols of the sittings have not yet been published, nor can they be seen in the archives. Russia had attained her object by the decision of the Conference on March 13th, and might keep a large fleet on the Black Sea. The right of the Porte remained unchanged as to the passage of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, so that between the claims of Russia and those of the Western Powers having a great interest in the preservation of the Porte, a just equilibrium was thus attained.

Bernstorff received the news of the conclusion of peace with real delight. What he had longed for as a youth, and what he had fought Austria for in the vigour of manhood, the right of Prussia to the hegemony of Germany, now seemed attained, and greater still, the struggles of the battlefields had brought about the union of Germany, North and South, as one country. He was German in the purest and noblest sense of the word, and that the victory had been gained by a valiant struggle against many old prejudices enhanced its value. He might well have realized the truth of Goethe's words:—

Der Mensch erfährt, er sei auch wer er mag,
Ein letztes Glück und einen letzten Tag.

He felt that the new German union should be at once proclaimed in all possible ways. Count Andreas writes:—
“It was for us Germans in London a great day when the Imperial German Crown set the final stone to the political edifice erected by the creators of the new Empire. Without waiting for orders from our Government, my father at once decided to call our house ‘The Imperial German Embassy.’ He had been Prussian Minister, Prussian Ambassador, and Ambassador of the North German Federation in London, and now at last he represented that national state which he had so greatly desired.¹

¹ Bernstorff to Balan. London, *February* 19th, 1871. Private letter.

“I have only just received the Ratification, and have asked for an audience. New credentials ought, I think, to have been sent, but people are extraordinarily slow, and I might almost say, indifferent about the matter. The King does not care about them, and Bismarck is grandly indifferent as to forms. I have had my visiting cards engraved quite simply: *L'Ambassadeur d'Allemagne*,’ and am called ‘*Le Plénipotentiaire d'Allemagne*’ at the Conference, for it could not be otherwise. ‘*L'Empereur allemand*,’ I shall never write in French, because it is against all usage in the language, and against all traditions. To say ‘the German Emperor,’ instead of naturally and simply saying ‘the Emperor of Germany,’ is an unfortunate subtilty which I do not understand. The King has more power than any former Kaiser ever had.”

"In consequence of the events of 1870-1, the position of Germans abroad was altered, and none felt it more than those who lived in foreign countries. I can remember many German women who had married in England and had ignored their German nationality now proudly acknowledging their origin. My father could well feel that he had carried out his work in England at that momentous period better than any other representative could have done who was less known and less beloved."

Bernstorff had congratulated the King and Crown Prince on every great event during the war, and he received from them both tokens of hearty sympathy and recognition. The following letters find a place here:—

The Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm to Count Bernstorff.

"VERSAILLES, *January 31st*, 1871.

"Accept, dear Count, my sincere thanks for the repeated expressions of your sympathy, and that of the amiable Countess, in the events which we have experienced during this wonderful war in France.

"My time permits me no correspondence, but I could not be silent after receiving several letters, the last one full of rejoicing at the restoration of the German Empire. I hope to God, with you and yours, that Germany's reunion will bring rich blessings to our country, and rich blossoms of peace. The task of our house is a great one, but I do not shrink from it: I rejoice at it.

"It is glorious to have lived at this time, and in the effort to do one's duty to have contributed to the restoration of the authority and power of Germany.

"I send my warmest regards to the dear Countess and your family, and I am, as ever, your very faithful,

"FRIEDRICH WILHELM, C.P."

[Telegram.]

Kaiser Wilhelm I. to Count Bernstorff.

(In reply to Bernstorff's congratulations at the Proclamation of the German Kaiser.)

"VERSAILLES, *January 27th*, 1871.

"Hearty thanks for your sympathy in the events of January 18th. New honours bring new duties. May I fulfil the expectations which are cherished. God will help me, as he has hitherto so visibly done. Still, it has been hard for me to put the old title in a second place, even though it has gained the new one. My kind remembrances to your wife.

"WILHELM."

[Telegram.]

Kaiser Wilhelm I. to Count Bernstorff.

"VERSAILLES, *February 27th*, 1871.

"My warmest thanks are due to you and yours for your congratulations on the preliminaries of peace. It crowns a glorious, but bloody work! May Germany prosper in peace, and France find rest.

"WILHELM."

[Telegram.]

Kaiser Wilhelm I. to Count Bernstorff.

"BERLIN, *June 21st*, 1871.

"Receive my hearty thanks for your faithful sympathy in the glorious and deeply moving celebrations on our entrance into Berlin, and at the Peace Festival. A worthy and noble close to the great events.

"WILHELM."

"A beautiful close to a war," writes Count Andreas, "although not really a part of it, was the visit of the

Crown Prince and Princess to London at the beginning of July. Queen Victoria, not caring for visits at Buckingham Palace when she was not there, had not invited her daughter. Still the Crown Princess greatly desired to go to London. My father and mother decided to invite the royal couple. This visit was for me personally a momentous event, of which I retain a charming remembrance. My heart always beat warmly for the Prince and Princess, and to have them in our home gave me immense pleasure. I cannot sufficiently praise their great amiability. The Crown Prince brought my father the Order of the Black Eagle, as an expression of the Imperial recognition of his conduct." An autograph letter accompanied this distinction, in words of highest consideration. A great reward for weary years of work and trouble.

Kaiser Wilhelm I. to Count Bernstorff.

"BERLIN, July 4th, 1871.

"You have worked for the Fatherland and for me for many years with great distinction, and during the past year your attitude towards the English Government, and not less so at the Black Sea Conference, has won a special claim to my recognition and gratitude, and I cannot express these feelings better than by conferring on you my high Order of the Black Eagle.

"May you wear it to the honour of the country, and of yourself in my service, for long years to come.

"Your well-inclined King,

"WILHELM."

We have Bernstorff's account of the investiture by the Crown Prince in a letter to his brother.

Count Bernstorff to his brother Hermann.

"LONDON, July 9th, 1871.

"I find a moment at last to tell you about the enclosed which you will have read in the newspapers. But the manner of the investiture of the highest distinction which I could earn, gives me special pleasure. The Crown Prince arrived on the 6th, and presented it to me just before dinner in my temporary dressing-room on the second floor as I was about to dress. He handed me a letter from the Kaiser with the insignia of the Order of the Black Eagle, and gave me a three-fold embrace, evidently with particular pleasure at the mission.

"I leave it, dearest Hermann, to other members of the family to tell you at some convenient time the contents of the letter, as I cannot, as you will understand, make it public yet. I will send a copy to my sisters.

"Such recognition and such thanks after such difficult and important events as those of this past year, is more to me than if I had received the Black Eagle years ago. I have no greater earthly honours to expect, but I am glad to be able to leave to my children and descendants such a visible sign of having in years of service done my duty."

Bernstorff had the great happiness of revisiting his home three times after this. All were full of rejoicing at the great victories, and at the restoration of Germany, and they were happy to receive the brave compatriot and fellow-worker with open arms. Kaiser Wilhelm thanked him again when he was in Berlin in the summer of 1871, for the labours of the last year. This praise from the King, whom he had loved so deeply and whom he had served so

faithfully, touched him to tears.¹ On his return to England, Bernstorff tried to bring about the rapprochement of that country and Germany after all the disagreeables which had arisen during the war. He retained the firm conviction throughout his life that the two peoples, as descendants of the same race and creed, should be united. In a letter to Balan in 1871 he bitterly complained of the, apparently, unconquerable dislike of the Chancellor to England.

The hour approached when his unwearied activity in the service of his Sovereign and country ended. He died on March 16th, 1873. The notice in the "Kreuz Zeitung" ran as follows:—"Although his health had been shaken for some years, he felt apparently well; but in the midst of his work he was overtaken by illness, the seeds of which had been sown by the trying labours of political life. Attended by the most skilful doctors, and the loving care of his family, he died after severe sufferings on March 26th.² Perfectly aware of the nature of his illness, he had set his house in order, and on the evening before his death he received the Holy Communion with his family. The funeral service took place on April 2nd at the German Chapel of the Embassy, and Dr. Wallbaum, the faithful friend and pastor of many years, preached the funeral sermon, from the text, Rev. xiv. 13: 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.'

"'Firm, frank, and pious,' was the motto of his life, which ended all too soon for his King, his country, and his family.

¹ He went to Berlin in January by Kaiser Wilhelm's desire to attend the investiture of the Order of the Black Eagle. He stayed there again the following summer for the last time.

² He had been seriously ill for seven weeks before his death.

"Firm and unafraid, Count Bernstorff undertook the disentanglement of difficult questions; he upheld Prussia's and Germany's honour in foreign lands, a task he never relinquished under the greatest difficulties.

"Frank in personal dealings, he knew how to win and keep friends everywhere. Although Count Bernstorff was a diplomatist of the old school in the best sense of the word, such as are now rare, he had no underhand doings, and united truth and openness with it, gaining confidence in all directions.

"Pious without parade, he never shunned confessing his faith. An Evangelical in belief, he was a faithful father and master of his home, in which he found his happiness.

"The sorrow for him is universal at home and abroad, for there as here, those who knew him say: 'A man, a real man, has died.'"

Touching are the letters from the Crown Prince and Princess to Countess Bernstorff. They are words of such sympathy and fellow-feeling as can only be uttered at the grave of a true friend, and which honour those that write and him of whom they are written. The Crown Prince justly says that a part of his youth disappears with Bernstorff; those charming days at Naples, and those of his engagement and marriage.

The Crown Prince to Countess Bernstorff.

"BERLIN, *March 27th*, 1873.

"My dear Countess,

"How much I have felt for you and your children during the past trying weeks, and how much you have been in my thoughts in the sorrow which is overwhelming you. I grieve with you at the home-going of your revered husband. I, who for so many years have known your domestic happiness, can measure the suffering of your poor heart in

this wrench from your earthly joy. I pray that God will give you strength to bear this sorrow, before which words are futile, however well they may be meant.

"It is as if a part of the history of my youth and the beginning of my own happiness had gone from me. My memories of 1854 at Naples, and of 1855 and 1858 in England, when you both were with me, are imperishable.

"Universal sympathy was aroused here during his illness and at the loss of such a high-minded official and representative of the Fatherland, and there is ample proof of this feeling in England also. May his qualities be inherited by his children, and you, revered Countess, find comfort in their happiness and prosperity.

"My three eldest children, who recollect with as much gratitude as I do the kindness which we ever received under your roof, would like to express their sympathy through me.

"May God with His comfort be with you. In old unchanging regard,

"Yours faithfully,

"FRIEDRICH WILHELM, Crown Prince."

The Crown Princess Victoria to Countess Bernstorff.

"BERLIN, *March 27th*, 1873.

"Dearest Countess,

"I cannot tell you with what feelings of sincerest sympathy we are thinking of you this morning, now that we know that the hardest blow has struck you. We deeply grieve that the long time of anxiety and care, which you have so faithfully borne, has had this sad ending. I can vividly understand your overpowering sorrow, and how sad is the thought that the house which gave us such hospitality is now the dwelling place of grief and tears, and can never be what it once was. I feel with you, dear

Countess, from the depth of my heart, and for your orphaned children. May God comfort you and give you strength to bear this heaviest of all trials. We shall keep your dear departed one in faithful memory. For me, my recollections of him extend back into my childhood, and I shall gladly and gratefully remember the great sympathy which he showed to me and mine.

"Pray tell your sons and daughters of my warm feeling, and let me say once more how much I feel with my whole heart for you.

"Yours sincerely,

"VICTORIA."

A letter from the Kaiserin Augusta was received by the heartbroken widow, and is a proof of the kind and faithful feeling which she entertained for Bernstorff and his family for so many years.

The Empress Augusta to Countess Bernstorff.

"BERLIN, April 28th, 1873.

"Beloved Countess,

"Your letter shows that you understand my sympathy for your loss, and that I mourn with you and your children for the great loss which has robbed the Kaiser and country of a faithful servant. When I recall the past year, it seems almost impossible that the excellent man whom I saw full of life in England is now no more with us, and yet the universal sympathy proves that he is no longer here. God has called him home. He will reward him and comfort you. You have a great support in your eldest son, and your daughter will prove herself a friend in this sad time. I am glad that the beloved Queen has given you a proof of her faithful heart, and I am convinced that all that human help can do for you will be done

in England. But real comfort comes only from above, as you well know. Accept again my deep sympathy.

"Your

"AUGUSTA."

The regret at Bernstorff's death was very great in England amongst all who knew him. He had been received at first with mistrust as the friend of Russia, but his distinguished, manly, steadfast character, and the nobility of his feelings, had won all hearts there.

His happy home-life appealed to them. . . . "He loved England," writes the "*Kreuz Zeitung*," "and knew it thoroughly; and as he clearly recognized its great qualities, he did not allow himself to be influenced by apparent inconsistency in English policy and the changes in public opinion. His relations with the Ministers were not only official, but friendly." Equally friendly with Whigs and Tories, he remained on good terms with both parties, whichever might be at the helm. The "*Times*" mentioned this in its obituary notice of him on March 26th. It says:—"The posthumous tribute which we are wont to pay to distinguished countrymen seems equally due to the memory of an eminent foreigner so well known and so highly esteemed among us as Albrecht, Count von Bernstorff, who died at a quarter before seven o'clock last evening, and a brief outline of whose career cannot be deemed ill-timed or inappropriate.

"He was the scion of an ancient stock, nearly related to the statesmen of the same name who occupy a conspicuous place in the domestic annals of Denmark. . . . He was born in March, 1809, but the first thing we find recorded of him is that he was destined from boyhood to the diplomatic career, and entered it under Ancillon as attaché to the Prussian Legation at Hamburg. After successively serving in that capacity at St. Petersburg and Paris, he was nominated

Councillor of Legation in 1837; an advancement—he being then hardly twenty-eight—which raises a fair presumption of recognized merit. After having been entrusted with a special mission to Naples, he was employed in Paris in 1842; and in 1845 he was made Minister Plenipotentiary at Munich. Here, while steadily opposing the efforts of the Ultramontane party, he notwithstanding contrived to stand high in the confidence of King Lewis. He was promoted to the higher embassy of Vienna in 1848, where he remained three years; and a stormy time he must have had of it, for the internal troubles, arising from revolutionary outbreaks, did not prevent Prussia and Austria from indulging their ingrained spirit of jealousy, and the decisive struggle for supremacy, which eventually arose in 1866, was within an ace of being precipitated in 1850. . . .

“The share which Bernstorff had in these occurrences and the extent to which his career was affected by them may be collected from the fact that he ceased to be Ambassador at Vienna. . . . In 1852 he was named to the Neapolitan Embassy for the second time, and retained it till April, 1854, when he was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of St. James's, in the place of the Chevalier von Bunsen. . . . Bernstorff was recalled in the autumn of 1861 to fill the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs vacated by von Schleinitz, and when the Liberal Cabinet resigned in 1862 he joined the short-lived Conservative or Reactionary Government of von der Heydt and von Roon. . . . It was as Ambassador that Bernstorff, after having been relieved of his Secretaryship, returned to London in October, 1862.

“His readiness to act with or under three Ministries in succession, and his acceptance of the British Embassy from the statesman who had superseded him, would imply that he had no strongly marked or pronounced opinions upon the schemes or systems of policy which involved the future

destiny of Germany as well as the interests and position of Prussia and the ups and downs of parties at Berlin. As his honesty of purpose, disinterestedness, and straightforwardness were beyond dispute, we take him to have been a politician of the Iron Duke stamp, who deemed the primary objects of a loyal subject and good citizen to be the steady support of the King's Government and the effective service of the State. Enough for him if he clearly understood and faithfully carried out his instructions. Had he been swayed by different considerations, occasions of difference must frequently have arisen during the last ten years in his correspondence with his far-seeing, grasping, and adventurous chief.

" . . . Judging from his practice, it seems to be Prince Bismarck's favourite doctrine that the most effective weapon in diplomacy, even when mystification may be the object, is the truth. . . . Count Bernstorff, with or without instructions, followed the example of his chief in this respect. He had no unnecessary reticence at any time. We have heard him say that in matters of public intelligence he thought himself fortunate if he was two hours ahead of the London journals, and it was at precisely the most interesting moments, when his diplomatic colleagues were doing their best, in their dense ignorance, to look knowing and mysterious, that he spoke out.

"We cannot conclude this brief notice without bearing testimony to the liberal and occasionally splendid hospitality of Prussia House under his auspices, enhanced and brightened by female courtesy and grace. The dedication of a work of high merit—'Die Gräfin von Albany'—by an ex-Minister, M. Alfred de Reumont, runs thus:—

"To Anna Cecilia, Countess of Bernstorff, the German woman who, in the society of England, represents her native country with grace, tact, and kindliness; who,

in a similar position in Italy, has left a gladly-cherished remembrance.'

"The many years that have elapsed since this dedication was written have amply confirmed the impression which it records; and when this 'German woman,' this illustrious lady, returns to the land she has so well represented, she will carry with her the consciousness that the cherished memory of Count Bernstorff will be gladly and durably associated by the society of England with her own."

Other English newspapers wrote in the same strain as the "Times."

It has been mentioned upon what friendly terms Count and Countess Bernstorff were with the Royal Family in England. They evinced their deep sympathy for her and her children at this time. The Queen and the Prince of Wales wrote her letters of condolence which were not those of mere conventional courtesy, but the sincere expression of heartfelt sympathy. The Queen's letter is most touching in its noble human sympathy. This she had already proved by calling upon the Countess during Count Bernstorff's illness, and again after his death.

Queen Victoria to Countess Bernstorff.

"LONDON, March 26th, 1873.

"My poor dear Countess,

"Words fail me to express my deep sympathy for you. No one on earth can give any comfort, only God. He alone can grant you strength and resignation to bear the heavy blow which He has sent. I know from my own sad experience how impossible it is to find comfort. One can only pray for calmness and resignation, and He will not forsake you. Those who rest upon the Almighty will not be forsaken. Although no real comfort is to be found

on earth, warm sympathy does one good, and you have this universally here, for your dear husband was universally respected. May you find consolation for your sorrow in the love of your children, and in the joyful hope of being reunited in a better world.

"This is the heartfelt wish of your sincere

"VICTORIA R."

"I beg you to express my warm sympathy to your children. Do not answer this, but let me know through your daughter how you are."

The Prince of Wales to Countess Bernstorff.

"Dear Countess, "LONDON, *March 27th*, 1873.

"The sad news of the irreparable loss which you and your family have suffered moves me deeply, and I must write a few lines to express my heartfelt sympathy for and with you. During the many years in which the Count has been here as the representative of a House so nearly connected with our own, he has seemed almost like a member of the family, and I learned to value and respect him most highly. I fully understand your deep sorrow. If anything can bring you comfort at this moment besides Divine Providence, it will be the consciousness of the sympathy, in your unspeakable grief, which fills the hearts of so many friends of the deceased.

"With the assurance of unchanging friendship,

"I remain, dear Countess,

"Your sincere

"ALBERT EDWARD."

Countess Bernstorff's grief at her husband's death was indescribable. The light of her life seemed to have gone, and it was only by degrees that her strong nature, supported

by religion, was brought back to the old routine of life.¹ The thought of her children, for whom she must henceforth be the head of the family, filled her with renewed strength. She lived at first in much retirement, but later on she spent the winters in Berlin, where she had many friends. In course of time her active mind again took up its interest in public affairs, especially in political events. Beloved and honoured by her family and by all who knew her, she died in Berlin on September 10th, 1893. She rests near her husband in the beautiful little family burial-ground near Stintenburg. It stands on a height, not far from the village of Lassahn, from which there is an extensive view over wood and sea, and all the beloved spots to which her heart clung in life.²

¹ The introductory words of the Countess's "Reminiscences" may find an appropriate place here; they bear witness how, after long years, her mourning for her husband was as deep as at first.

"For many years I have wished to look over my diary and to correct it, but, oh, the wound is still open, and the contrast to my present life is too great. I have repeatedly begun, but I have always been obliged to give it up because my health and feelings suffered from the effort!

"*'Nessun maggiore dolore che ricordarsi del tempo felice nella miseria.'* I have tried again this autumn, but too much sorrow weighed me down, and I could not work on it without too great pain at the remembrance of the beautiful, happy life which was mine when I wrote these pages. I shall, perhaps, be able to do this later on, but this much I should like to say now. . . . [Here follow the pages of her English Reminiscences.]

"Stintenburg, October, 1888.

"ANNA BERNSTORFF.

"P.S.—I have always intended to have these leaves copied. If I should not have done so, I leave it to my children, for it will interest the family, and may be used in a life of their beloved father."

² Count and Countess Bernstorff's children were:—

Andreas Petrus, Wirklicher Geheimer Oberregierungsrat, heir to Stintenburg. Royal Kammerherr. Born May 20th, 1844. Died April 21st, 1907.

Marie Therese. Born June 12th, 1848. Died July 12th, 1902.

Friedrich Wilhelm. Born September, 1849. Died February, 1850.

Friedrich Wilhelm. Born December 8th, 1853. Oberleutenant a. D. Died April 2nd, 1908.

Victoria Anna. Born February 19th, 1857.

Percy. Regierungspräsident in Cassel. Born June 17th, 1858.

Johann Heinrich. Born November 14th, 1862. Minister to Egypt.

It is one of the purest and greatest pleasures to study the development and career of a noble, richly-endowed human life, especially one spent in a high and responsible station, and doubly so when it bears the distinctive German features of a great past, in which our nation rose from the misery of many small states to its political unity as by a miracle. Bernstorff, faithfully seconded by his wife, lived through all this time as from darkness to light, as both actor and fighter. At the beginning of his career he saw the distracted condition of his country, and the terrible hatred between the various parties, which treated each other like deadly enemies. To a certain set the thought of political unity was a revolutionary crime; while a great part of the Liberal party seemed to the Conservative, especially to every nobleman, as "an enemy to his country." Both sides had honourable intentions, both believed that by fighting for their principles they worked for the salvation of their country, though in reality they retarded the peaceful development which, according to the law of nature, could only be attained by the co-operation of all. Thus a Conservative was called a "Reactionary," the moderate Liberal who tried by reform to create a united country, a "Revolutionary." This fatal mistake explains much of the sad state of things in our country in the forties and fifties. The discord among parties was increased by all sorts of religious differences, by the antagonism between North and South, through the jealousy for their sovereignty, of the smaller states, and, above all, by the struggles of the two great German Powers to obtain the hegemony of Germany, so that finally, it was a fight of all, against all. For a time it seemed as if the voice of the moderate would be silenced, and as if our country was always to be torn hither and thither between Reaction and Revolution, when at last, at the most critical moment, help came.

In Bernstorff's character from his earliest youth we see the national features. Born in a small state, he early learned to appreciate the great blessing of a strong united country, compared with the helplessness of politically dwarfed states. He saw with prophetic spirit that Prussia was the Power of the future for Germany. Then fate threw him at Vienna, where the horrors of revolution affected him so powerfully that for a short time he was almost inclined to condemn even the struggle for a restoration of united Germany, together with the revolutionary movement of the time. But his eyes were opened in Vienna, where he observed close at hand the faults of the victorious reaction, and where he had to see how Schwarzenberg put the interests of Germany in a secondary place, while the struggle to humiliate and defeat Prussia was the first consideration. He then learned to understand the depth of the German movement for unity, and its efforts to obtain a more compact Germany. He comprehended the necessity of opposing the efforts of Austria to obtain the hegemony of Germany. And he, who originally rejected the policy of union, judged more favourably its advocate, Radowitz, his former opponent. Thus he tried, in negotiating with Schwarzenberg, to save as much as possible of the "Union" without, to his distress, finding any support at home. The efforts which he made at the Convention of September 30th, 1849, to obtain for Prussia at least the predominance in North Germany, and not to let the great national movement end in failure, were frustrated by the indifference of the Prussian Government. Bernstorff had to experience the day of Olmütz, and see with anxiety how Russian policy helped Schwarzenberg to realize his "State Wisdom." From that day he had turned away from Russia, the land of Conservative interests, as he had once regarded it. From this time for-

ward he began to see in the English Commonwealth one of the bulwarks against the spread of Russian and French power, and to this he remained firm till death. Germany and Great Britain seemed to him the two Powers of the future called upon to defend the freedom of Europe. He had, however, to experience the oft-repeated refusal of the English nation to all advances from Germany.

As Minister he came into a difficult time of transition and his efforts were frequently misunderstood by the Prussian people. He, who in conjunction with King Wilhelm again took up the policy of union, who fearlessly defended the idea of a smaller Germany, and maintained a national standpoint both in regard to the Hessian and the Schleswig-Holstein questions, was misunderstood by the country. It did not give him credit for being thoroughly in earnest in national affairs. His policy in home affairs was also not appreciated. He was considered a "Reactionary" by many, and a deadly enemy of Constitutionalism, whereas he placed his portfolio at the King's disposal on most strictly constitutional grounds. Thus had a true patriot to suffer at that time of political misunderstandings.

On his return to England he had to endure considerable bitterness in consequence of the vagaries of public opinion. The fury of the English towards Prussia in the Schleswig-Holstein question and in the war against Austria till just before the decisive moment, proved to him how much foreigners had become accustomed to count upon Germany's powerlessness. All the more did he rejoice when monarchical Prussia took in hand the freeing of the nation, and carried it out successfully. His King, to whom he as a faithful knight was devoted, should now wear the Imperial crown; reaction and revolution should no longer oppose each other in German policy, but right and left were to join hands to create the glorious unity of the

German Empire. His life closed thus happily. An aristocracy characterized by such pure, noble feeling must be the pride of every country. That England possessed so many elements in her aristocracy which corresponded to this ideal, who deemed it a point of honour to become leaders to the people, made him doubly value it. He, the Low-German, who was so proudly modest, faithful to his King, and yet independent in his opinions, felt that he was among people of the same blood. There he felt happy, and hoped to remain till the end of his life. Only a short time before his death he said that a day would come when the misunderstandings between the two countries would disappear.

All friends and relatives attest that Bernstorff was a man of the noblest character both in public and private life. It was firmly imprinted on his soul that if a man had not love he was but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. His beautiful home life, and the devotion with which he clung to his family also, made him feel in great sympathy with England. He had, indeed, a wife who in her love and tenderness understood him as none other could. Her household was ruled to perfection, notwithstanding the demands of her social life. But all her thoughts and feelings were absorbed by her husband. When he was away, she was anxious about him, and only felt at rest when he was near. After his death her house was like a temple dedicated to his memory.

Bernstorff died in the firm faith in God and His Revelation, and this was his solace in the parting from his family.

When Bismarck, many years later, was once asked whom he would designate among his colleagues as a type of the genuine, aristocratic nobleman and gentleman, he replied, after some thought: "Count Albrecht von Bernstorff."

With the testimony of this great man to one of his fellow-workers, we will close this book. May the memory of the brave and noble man, who strove for the honour and greatness of Prussia in times of difficulty, live in the minds of the German people, and may he serve to the coming generation as the model of a true Christian and patriot, as the representative of a type of single-hearted, loving humanity.

APPENDIX

The Princess of Prussia to Countess von Bernstorff.

“Chère Comtesse!

“BERLIN, 28 avril, 1846.

“Vous dire à la fois l’embarras et le regret que j’éprouve de ne vous écrire qu’aujourd’hui après un silence de trois mois qui a dû vous paraître inexplicable—c’est ce que je ne puis—je dois donc m’adresser à votre cœur pour obtenir l’absolution qu’il ne me refusera point. Vous me connaissez assez pour savoir que je suis vraie, vous croirez donc à l’assurance que votre lettre était une des plus senties, des mieux écrites et des plus intéressantes que j’ai reçues depuis longtemps. Elle m’a fait un plaisir que je m’abstiens de qualifier car savoir qu’elle vient de vous le dit assez—mais apprenez du moins que j’y ai retrouvé la justesse d’observation, et si j’ose le dire la fraîcheur de sentiments que je savais apprécier dans nos rapports journaliers. Ce sont—croyez le moi—de grands avantages pour une femme appelée comme vous à offrir le bonheur domestique et à figurer dans le grand monde. L’esprit sans le cœur, ou le cœur sans l’esprit ne contenterait ni l’un ni l’autre, la réunion seule donne le charme qui satisfait à toutes les exigences de position. Mais pardon de ce raisonnement qui pourrait paraître extraordinaire à l’entrée d’une lettre, s’il ne se rattachait pas à des entretiens que je me rappellerai toujours avec reconnaissance.

“Depuis cette première lettre qui me transportait en idée

soit à Hombourg soit à Munich dans ce monde naguère inconnue par moi mais que vous m'avez appris à connaître d'une manière si amusante j'ai reçu une seconde lettre accompagnée du plus joli verre qui se puisse voir et qui siège dans mon cabinet rouge à la portée de tous les regards. Après avoir accepté tous mes remerciements pour les preuves de votre souvenir et spécialement pour cette aimable attention, laissez moi, ma chère Comtesse, vous expliquer les motifs de mon retard involontaire. J'ai passé un triste hiver, pendant près de neuf semaines je n'ai pas pu écrire et plus tard je n'ai pas su qu'écrire, craignant d'ennuyer pas des plaintes sur ma santé ceux-là même qui me portent intérêt et bon souvenir comme vous, ma chère Comtesse. La rougeole n'est rien mais ses suites sont pénibles et j'étais loin de m'en douter en tombant malade. À présent, Dieu merci, je suis rétablie et je puis derechef disposer de mes yeux que j'apprécie bien plus depuis que j'ai connu, grâce à leur inactivité, tous les tourments de l'ennui.

“ Nous venons de passer par une époque bien pénible ! Vous concevez quelle perte nous avons faite par la morte de cette digne Princesse Guillaume aussi aimée dans notre famille que respectée dans le public.¹ Le Prince, son époux, et la Reine intimement liée avec elle ont le plus perdu ; ses enfants sont touchants dans leur pieuse résignation mais je redoute le retour du fils cadet qui ne sait pas encore le malheur qui l'a frappé. La pauvre Princesse n'a pas cessé de souffrir depuis sa longue maladie à Hombourg, et elle a été alitée les derniers mois. Je suis chargée par le Prince de vous présenter ses hommages et je me joins à lui pour vous prier de dire mille choses au Comte Bernstorff. Le Prince m'a dit dans le temps où il entra en fonction qu'il était frappé de la manière sage et correcte dont le Comte envisageait son poste et qu'il avait la meilleure opinion de ses talents. Je

¹ Wife of Prince Wilhelm of Prussia, third brother of Friedrich Wilhelm III.

vous le dis parceque je sais que vous mettez du prix à l'opinion du Prince et qu'elle confirme celle de notre pauvre Bülow à l'égard de votre mari.

"Je suis sûre qu'il aura été peiné de la mort de son ancien chef quoique l'état déplorable où il se trouvait réduit, devait faire envissager sa mort comme une délivrance.

"Je voudrais pouvoir vous donner des nouvelles d'ici mais je ne trouve rien d'intéressant à vous mander car n'ayant pas paru dans le monde cet hiver j'ai perdu de vue les différentes fractions de la société. Nous avons donné un bal à la Mi-carême pour nous acquitter tant bien que mal de nos devoirs de politesse et avant Pâques nous avons eu quelques petites réunions chez nous, composée à peu près toujours des mêmes personnes. La société s'élargit, mais le nombre des personnes agréables diminue toujours plus et finira je le crains par se réduire à rien. Lady Westmorland qui vous conserve un très bon souvenir, est presque toujours souffrante. Mes projets de cet été ne sont pas encore arrêtés mais j'espère pouvoir passer quelque semaines chez mes parents et j'attends la décision du médecin à l'égard de la cure que je devrais entreprendre.

"Je me flatte que votre enfant va bien les miens grandissent prodigieusement. Il est temps de finir cette lettre mais je ne saurais le faire sans vous réitérer, ma chère Comtesse, l'expression du plus tendre intérêt et des meilleurs vœux pour tout ce qui vous concerne. Gardez moi toujours votre souvenir affectueux.

"PRINCESSE DE PRUSSE."

The Princess of Prussia to Countess Bernstorff.

"Chère Comtesse! "BABELSBERG, octobre 10, 1848.

"Comment vous remercier pour votre aimable et intéressante lettre! Tout ce que je puis vous dire c'est qu'elle a vivement frappé mon esprit et qu'elle a touché mon

cœur. C'est donc à double titre que ma reconnaissance vous est due et que je viens vous l'exprimer. Je compterais toujours sur vous comme sure une âme fidele et vous compterez sur moi comme vous me connaissez. Que de choses se sont passées depuis que nous nous sommes vues et encore depuis le compte rendu que vous m'avez tracé. Cette lettre (un petit chef d'œuvre soit dit en parenthèse) faisait prévoir un nouvel orage; il est venu et nous concerne tous! Je m'inquiète à votre égard car je vous sais au milieu de tout cela, et sans doute décidée à ne pas quitter votre mari. Parlez à ce dernier de mon estime et de mon souvenir, et comptez tous deux sur le prix que nous mettons—le Prince et moi—à votre sympathie. Nous sommes bien malheureux depuis 8 mois et nous ne nous faisons aucune illusion à l'égard de l'avenir! Que Dieu ait pitié de nous et daigne donner à notre patrie les hommes dont elle a besoin. Je voudrais vous revoir, ma chère Comtesse, car il y a bien longtemps que ce plaisir m'est refusé, mais comment faire des projets de nos jours. On vit du jour au lendemain avec crainte, et la vie perd son charme. Je me flatte que vous avez de bonnes nouvelles de votre famille. Laissez moi, ma chère Comtesse, vous parler encore une fois du plaisir que vous m'avez fait en m'écrivant et acceptez l'assurance des sentiments inaltérables que vous porte votre toute affectionnée,

"A. PR. DE PRUSSE."

Friedrich Wilhelm IV. to Napoleon III.

"Monsieur mon Frère, "BELLEVUE, mars 8, 1855.

"Je ne puis laisser retourner le général de Wedell à Paris, sans adresser quelques lignes directement à votre Majesté. Elle a l'âme trop élevée, pour ne pas apprécier l'impression profondément douloureuse qu'a dû produire sur moi la mort imprévue de mon Beau-frère, l'Empereur Nicolas

de Russie. Je fais des vœux que la Providence dirige son successeur dans des voies, qui pourront épargner à l'Europe les malheurs d'une guerre générale. Je continue à considérer une union étroite de mon Gouvernement avec celui de Votre Majesté comme désirable dans l'intérêt de la paix, et je ne cesserai pas d'y vouer mes sincères efforts. Mes intentions à ce sujet sont consignées dans une dépêche au comte de Hatzfeldt, que celui-ci ne tardera pas de porter à la connaissance du Cabinet de Votre Majesté. Vous y trouverez, Sire, les motifs qui m'ont engagé à adhérer sans modification au protocole dont Votre Majesté a placé le projet dans les mains du général de Wedell et qui est identique à celui du 28 décembre, accepté plus tard par le Prince de Gortschakoff.

“J'ai la confiance que votre Majesté accordera son suffrage à ma manière d'agir et y reconnaître le véritable désir de préparer un rapprochement de plus en plus intime entre nos Gouvernements et je profite avec un plaisir tout particulier de cette occasion, pour renouveler à Votre Majesté l'expression de la haute estime et de la sincère amitié, avec lesquelles je suis,

“Monsieur mon Frère,

“de Votre Majesté le bon Frère,

“FRÉDÉRIC GUILLAUME.”

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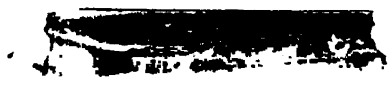
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